

# New-age home for the aged

**ASTAFF REPORTER**

For those entering their twilight years and looking for peace and a helping hand, Ananda Ashram might prove to be the perfect solution.

Spread over 18 cottahs in Gobindapur, on the Garia-Baruipur route, and surrounded by greenery, the new-age home for the aged has been designed to provide comfort and peace of mind to its residents.

Supported by the ITC Ladies Social and Welfare Society, Ananda Ashram offers amenities such as television, computers with broadband connection, telephone in every room and access to cars.

The ashram, inaugurated in May, is run by NGO Navodaya and currently provides accommodation facilities for nearly 50 elderly men and women. The administrators are planning to add four floors to the single-storeyed building over the next few years.

"Quality living is what we are offering. In today's society, nuclear families are replacing joint families. Sadly, the elderly are getting neglected. We have built Ananda Ashram as



citizen in the verandah of an Ananda Ashram room. Picture by Pabitra Das

an alternative option for the aged or as a home away from home," said Arunima Gooptu, president of Navodaya and the brains behind the ashram.

"It has been a conscious decision to build the ashram on the outskirts of the city so that the elderly can live in an idyllic and therapeutic environment. However, the place is well-connected to major hospitals and nursing homes," she added. ■

Gooptu, who donated the land on which the ashram stands, pointed out that the project could not have been implemented without the support of ITC.

"When Bharti Deveshwar, president, ITC Ladies Social and Welfare Society, got to know of our plans, she immediately agreed to provide funds for the construction of the main building," said Gooptu.

The furnished rooms, with attached bath, are available on a twin-sharing basis. Entire rooms are also allotted to individuals on request. Senior citizens can avail of the short-stay facilities as well.

"Short-stay facilities are ideal for those who do not want to leave their parents alone when they are away. They can pick up the parents once they return to the city," elaborated Shantisri Roy, secretary, Navodaya.

Ananda Ashram residents are encouraged to participate in a number of vocational and social service activities in nearby villages.

"The elderly have a lot to contribute to society and must be given the opportunity to showcase their abilities in every way possible. We plan to make sure that they remain mentally alert and, therefore, we will be organising events on a regular basis to keep them involved," stated Gooptu.

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