

New-age home for aged on cards

ARINDAM Sarkar
Kolkata, May 25

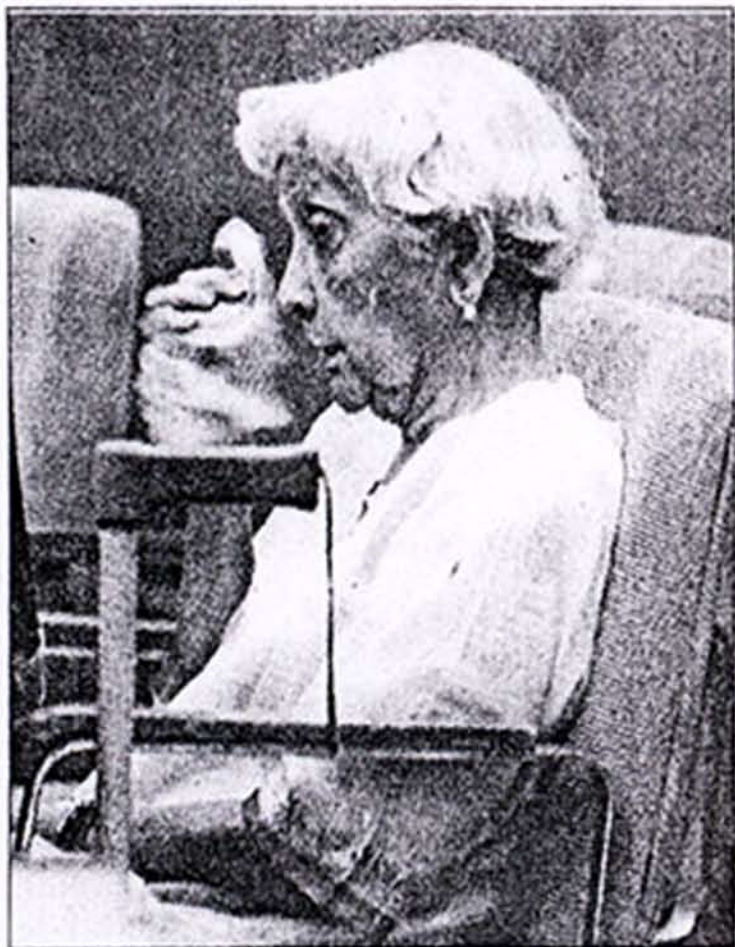
HERE'S GOOD news for senior citizens in the city who want to spend their twilight days away from home in comfort. An old-age home coming up near Baruipur promises them not only a roof over their heads, but also a decent living and the comforts of the basic as well as modern facilities.

Financially backed by the ITC Ladies Social and Welfare Society and run by an NGO called Navodaya, Ananda Ashram, as the home has been named, will house 50 elderly people who don't want to stay alone and are willing to pay more for a little bit of comfort in their last years.

Coming up at Gobindapur village in Baruipur (half-an-hour drive from Ballygunge Park), Ananda Ashram is spread over nine kathas of land. The adjacent nine kathas have been demarcated for laying out a well-manicured garden. An interesting aspect of this old-age home is that the inmates here would be encouraged to engage themselves in vocational activities or social service in the nearby villages.

"When Bharti Deveswar asked me whether I had any specific plans, I told her what I had envisioned. She liked my plan and immediately agreed to provide funds for the construction of the ground floor building. I have provided the land," said Arunima Gooptu of ITC Ladies Social and Welfare Society. She is also actively engaged with Navodaya.

Plans are afoot, Gooptu said, to raise the building to G + 4. At Ananda Ashram, inmates would have TV and phone in their rooms. "The residents would also enjoy internet facilities, weekly medical check-ups, good food and car facilities too. Situated in the lush green environment, doctors, corporate bosses, NRIs and other successful professionals have already approached us for staying



here," she said.

Ananda Ashram, Gooptu said, is different from the other old age homes in the city in more ways than one. The most obvious difference is that it will be much more expensive than the others. Old age homes such as Nabanir, Shanti Nivas and Green View take care of the elderly who do not have any means to fend for themselves, but the people who are opting to stay at Ananda Ashram are successful professionals. They have already deposited a refundable amount of Rs 2 lakh and are paying Rs 4,500 per month for a comfortable stay in this home.

Ananda Ashram will also offer facilities of short stays to interested senior citizens. People who do not want to leave their parents alone when they are away can let their parents stay here till they return. "The facility of short stay is bound to come as good news for the elderly people who feel scared to live alone when their families are away," said Navodaya's Shantisri Roy.