

# HelpAge NEWS



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## EDITOR *Speaks*

Dear Readers,

A silent revolution is taking place aimed at fighting for the rights of the elderly. HelpAge has always believed in a life of quality care for senior citizens. It is now fighting for their rights more forcefully than ever before, roping in decision makers others across the globe to do the same. One such example was the Asia Pacific Regional Seminar on 'Ensuring Social Protection/Social Pensions in Old Age in the Context of Rapid Ageing in Asia' that was held in Thailand which I attended.

I encouraged the experts & dignitaries present, to think about the very real problem of lack of Social Security for the elderly, and spoke about the HelpAge's PACS project in operation in the backward districts of MP, UP and Jharkhand, which deals with this issue. HelpAge plans to take this project to other states now. Countries like Nepal, Cambodia, and Indonesia plan to take up similar programmes.

This October, International Day of Older persons was celebrated in Delhi with Smt. Meira Kumar, Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment and Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, Lok Sabha Speaker, who reinforced the role of the Govt. in policy making.

I recently sent across some suggestions to the CMD of National Insurance Company for their mediclaim scheme to be launched for senior citizens. Finally after all the painstaking efforts, the first ever health insurance for Senior citizens was launched in Kolkata by President, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam titled "Varistha Mediclaim for Senior Citizens." The scheme is for the age Group of 60 years to 80 years which can be extended to 90 years on renewal basis.

"These are some concrete steps being taken in the fight against isolation, neglect and poverty of the elderly. Please speak up for the elderly in your family and community.

*Mathew Cherian*  
**Mathew Cherian**  
 Chief Executive  
 HelpAge India

## World Elders Day

### Working hand in hand with the Govt.



Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, releases HelpAge India's annual report on World Elders Day. From the left are Mr. M. M. Sabharwal, President Emeritus of HelpAge, Mr. Mathew Cherian, Chief Executive, and Mrs. Grace Pinto, Director of the St. Xavier's and Ryan International group of School, who support the cause in a big way.

The World Elders Day or International Day of Older Persons (Oct 1) as it is called, provides a platform to uphold the concerns of the aged across the country. Once again this year, HelpAge joined hands with the Govt. to mark this special day.

Early morning in the capital, an intergenerational walkathon was flagged off by Smt. Meira Kumar, Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment, followed by Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, gracing the function in the evening.

Events took place all across the country—felicitating the elderly, involving them in fun activities, talks to governments took place, health camps were organized along with other programmes beneficial to them.



Smt. Meira Kumar, Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment, flags off the inter-generational walk at India Gate in Delhi. Lending a hand are, Mr. Mathew Cherian (right), Chief Executive of HelpAge, and Mr. M. M. Sabharwal (third from right), President Emeritus.



Dr. H.S. Bakshi, Regional Director (North), HelpAge, welcomes Smt. Pratibha Patil, Governor of Rajasthan, at the "Social Responsibility Awards 2005-06" function at Raj Bhawan in Jaipur. Smt. Patil presented awards to schools and business personalities who have given continuous support to the cause. Awards were presented to DSCL (Kota), Gail India Ltd. (Jaipur), Kaya Kalp Herbals Pvt. Ltd. (Jaipur), G. N. Palriwala Foundation (New Delhi), Marwar Motors Pvt. Ltd (Bikaner), Jaipur Bikaner Transport Company (Bikaner), Mount Shivalik Industries Ltd. (Jaipur), Mataji Milan Devi Society (Regd.) (New Delhi) and Global Institute of Technology Society (Jaipur).

In J&K, boat rides for older people at Dal Lake were flagged off by Dr. Asgar Samoon, Secretary (IAS), Social Welfare (Govt. of J&K). A function was organized in partnership with Global Green Peace and Department of Information & Social Welfare (Govt. of J&K). A free medical camp was organized at Rainawari (Srinagar).

## Bringing ageing issues to the forefront

In Gurgaon (Haryana) a mega medical camp for senior citizens was held. In Chandigarh, an intergenerational walkathon was flagged off by Mr. R.K. Rao, Deputy Commissioner, Chandigarh, and residents of old age homes were taken out for a film.

In the South, celebrations ranged from inter - home visits of elders in Madurai, health camp & sports for elders in Coimbatore, to a seminar held on "Challenging issues on Ageing", octogenarians being honoured, dance & fancy dress competitions, picnic and talent competitions for elders in Chennai. **In Nagapattinam 800 older people under the Tsunami rehabilitation programme walked to the District Collector's office to**

**submit a memorandum of recommendations.** In Andhra Pradesh walkathons, games, sports and get togethers for elders, along with grandparents meet, a mega health camp and a seminar on elder abuse were organized.

The **North-East** celebrated by honouring 10 noted senior citizens in customary tradition, in association with project partner Demow Commercial Institute in Assam. School children depicted the inseparable bond between the young and the old through dance and music.

The **West** had it's own set of unique celebrations. In Goa an intergenerational walkathon was organised and Mr. S.C. Jamir, Governor of Goa, urged people to recognize the importance of the elderly in our society. In Mumbai well known actor Mr. Aftab Shivadasani, championed the cause and encouraged people to look after their elderly. In Nagpur, an unusual fashion show was organized where the models were none other than senior citizens themselves, a walkathon with school children of New Apostolic English High School took place, a street play was performed at an MMU site, and Grans of Madhuban Vriddh Ashram (an old age home) performed for students of the School of Scholars, Amravati.



Elderly widows line up at a medical camp organised in Kashmir on the occasion of World Elders Day.

Significant victory for PACS

## Panchayat meetings to include social security

HelpAge's rights entitlement programme for the elderly, in UP, MP and Jharkhand, witnessed another step forward. The Commissioner, Panchayat and Social Justice, Madhya Pradesh, has issued directions to all District Magistrates of the state to ensure that social security of elderly in the unorganized sector is part of the agenda at Panchayat meetings.

The PACS or Poorest Areas Civil Society programme works within the community, involving policy-makers through an active information dissemination campaign that helps them secure the rights of the elderly. The aim is to make social, economic and habitat security accessible to the neglected elderly.

A PACS National convention was organized in Delhi, with the participation of the elderly from all the 3 target states. The purpose was to share field experience with Government representatives and other stake holders. Representatives of older people's groups, village level workers and local project partners also participated. At the conclusion of the workshop, recommendations were made and presented by HelpAge to the Planning Commission.



Mr. Shatrughan Sinha, MP (Rajya Sabha), releases the PACS poster along with Mr. Avijeet Kumar (second from left), Project Director (PACS) and Mr. Avenash Datta (right), Country Head (Programmes) at the Convention organized in Delhi. On the left is Ms. Latika R. Ghotge, Deputy Director (West), HelpAge.

## Going beyond the call of duty

HelpAge India's Mobile Medicare Unit Programme, conceived to supplement the government's primary health care programme and to reach quality healthcare to the elderly, has expanded its reach and coverage in many different ways. MMU Vemagiri (A.P) is a fine example of how the programme is impacting the lives of the community in more ways than one.

The team recently supported the Pulse Polio Programme in the state. HelpAge's Quick Reaction team, a youth group dedicated to the cause of the elderly, travelled to remote rural areas and vaccinated 209 grand children of poor elderly people.

In recognition of its pioneering work, the unit has been nominated by the government to monitor the "Age at Marriage & Neo Natal Care Awareness Programme" in the area.

Going door to door, the MMU team encourages the elderly to get their grand children married only after attaining the right age, and creating awareness especially among grandmothers about care of new-borns within the family.



A member of HelpAge's Quick-Response team administers polio vaccine to a child

## Workshops held on emergencies, ageing challenges

Mr. Basharat Ahmed Dhar, Divisional Commissioner (Kashmir), was the chief guest at a workshop and training on Disaster Preparedness in Srinagar (J&K), organised in collaboration with UNDP, GGP and Life Help, Chennai. Home Guards, Civil Defence and Fire Service personnel were trained on how to manage crisis situations.

A one-day workshop on the "Issues and Challenges of Ageing" was

organized in Chennai for organisations working in age-care.

Mr. Mathew Cherian, Chief Executive of HelpAge, inaugurated the workshop. The participants provided recommendations on Health, Home Care, Government programmes & Socio-Economic Security, which were submitted to the State Social Welfare Department for consideration in the 11th Planning Commission.

## HelpAge acknowledges:

- WNS Global Services Pvt. Ltd, Mumbai, for funding 1600 eye surgeries in Mumbai, Pune, Nasik, and Gurgaon, adopting 30 elders for 3 years, and earlier, for supporting Tsunami relief operations.
- The Canadian High Commission for giving a grant of Rs.1.41lakh to enhance & promote good governance, democratic development and respect for the rights of disadvantaged elderly, through an advocacy initiative in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- HP Global e-business Operations Pvt. Ltd., Bangalore, for donating Rs. 1.15 lakh to support 115 cataract surgeries.

### Thank You!

- Lions Club, Pollachi.
- Mr. H.E. Wilkins, President, Doveton-Corrie Protestant Schools Association, Chennai.
- Delhi Public School, Panipat Refinery.
- Red FM Radio.
- Madras Christian College Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Chennai.
- Cambridge Foundation School, Delhi.
- Mahatma Montessori Mat. Hr. Sec. School, Madurai.
- Delhi Public School, Kalinga (Cuttack).



Mr. Shiv Kumar, CGM, SBI cuts the ribbon to launch the new vehicle donated by the State Bank of India (SBI) replacing the old Mobile Medicare Unit in Varanasi. Looking on are (from his left) Mr. Naresh Kr. Malhotra, DGM, SBI, Mr. A. K. Singh, Joint Director (North), HelpAge, and Mr. Prashant Kumar, AGM, SBI. SBI has Rs.5 lakh (approx.) for the same.



Mr. Pat Bourne, Deputy Ambassador, Embassy of Ireland visits the MMU in Coimbatore, and understands its functioning from HelpAge staff members. The Irish Embassy has been supporting Coimbatore MMU's running cost for 3 years.



Mr. M.S. Rao, Dy. Chairman, Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT) signs the first Pay Roll Giving (Amrit Varsha) form, pledging VPT's support to the cause. Looking on are (from left) HelpAge representatives (A.P) Mr. S. Dass, Mr. S.V. Srinivas, and Mr. Mohd. Raza Mohammed.



Renowned geriatrician Dr. Vinod Kumar (left) presents a cheque of Rs. 1.25 lakh, on behalf of Intas Pharmaceuticals, to Mr. Pradeep Loyal, Director (Corporate Fund Raising), HelpAge. As part of Intas's ongoing cause related marketing initiative with HelpAge, Rs. 1/- from sale of each strip of the medicine Nervz goes to HelpAge. This is their second consecutive year of support to the cause.

Mr. M.M. Sabharwal (right), President Emeritus, HelpAge, receives the "Life Time Achievement Award" conferred upon him by Human Care Charitable Trust (regd.), which works for the poor & needy. He was also conferred with the title "Honorific Gerac" for his contribution to HelpAge India and the field age care, by the Geriatric Society of India.



Mr. Santanu Banik, Executive (Resource Mobilization), HelpAge, hands over a Certificate of Appreciation to Sister Anna Maria, Principal, St. Joseph's Convent, Chandannagar, Hoogly, West Bengal. The school has contributed over Rs. 1.41 lakh.



Students of Alvernia Mat. Hr. Sec. School, Coimbatore, stand proudly with their awards along with their Principal, Sr. Susan Grace who receives a special trophy from Mrs. Indrani Rajadurai (centre), Regional Director (South), HelpAge. The students collected over Rs.5 lakh for the elderly.



Students of School of Scholars, Amravati (Nagpur), interact with the elderly residing in an old age Home.



Mr. Mathew Cherian, Chief Executive of HelpAge, honors Master R. Sachin, studying in Class 2 of Lechateliers Matric School, Mellur, for collecting the highest funds for the elderly. He raised Rs. 21,605.



Mr. Farooq Renzu, Director of Information (Kashmir Govt.), interacts with a young student of DPS Srinagar, on Grandparents Day. Also in the picture are (from right) school principal Ms. Neeru Suman, a grandparent, and Mr. P. Rajan, Project Manager, (Kashmir Earthquake Response Programme). Grand parents taking care of their grand children were honored with shawls.



A student of St. Columba's School, Delhi, shakes hands with Fr. Susai Sebastian, Director of Chetanalaya, a partner of HelpAge, after handing him a cheque for the Sponsor-A-Grandparent programme. Looking on are Brother Lobo (second from left), Principal of the school, Mrs. Gloria Paul, of HelpAge, and a representative from Chetanalaya. The school donated Rs.1.77 lakh.



Dr. H S Bakshi (right), Regional Director (North), HelpAge receives a cheque worth Rs. 52,000 from Mrs. Anita Paulin Dey, Principal, W.H Smith Memorial School, Varanasi, as donation towards the cause. Looking on is Mr. Rajiv Agrawal (IAS), District Magistrate, Varanasi on the occasion of World Elders Day. The school has pledged life long support to HelpAge.

## HelpAge Members Honored



The Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission has appointed Ms. Indrani Rajadurai, Regional Director (South), HelpAge, as a member of the Working Group on services for vulnerable sections of society (handicapped, aged, destitute etc.) of the 11th five-year plan (2007-2012).



Ms. Rainu Singh, Deputy Director (Rajasthan), HelpAge was felicitated with the Priyadarshini Award on the occasion of the death anniversary of former Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi. The award was presented to 11 women in Rajasthan for outstanding achievements in their respective fields.

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