

OLD AGE HAVENS WITH A DIFFERENCE

The glitter of fine living comes to the golden years as retirement homes go the resort way, with good food, fun and facilities *By* **AYESHA SINGH, A SATISH and TEJASWINI PAGDALA**

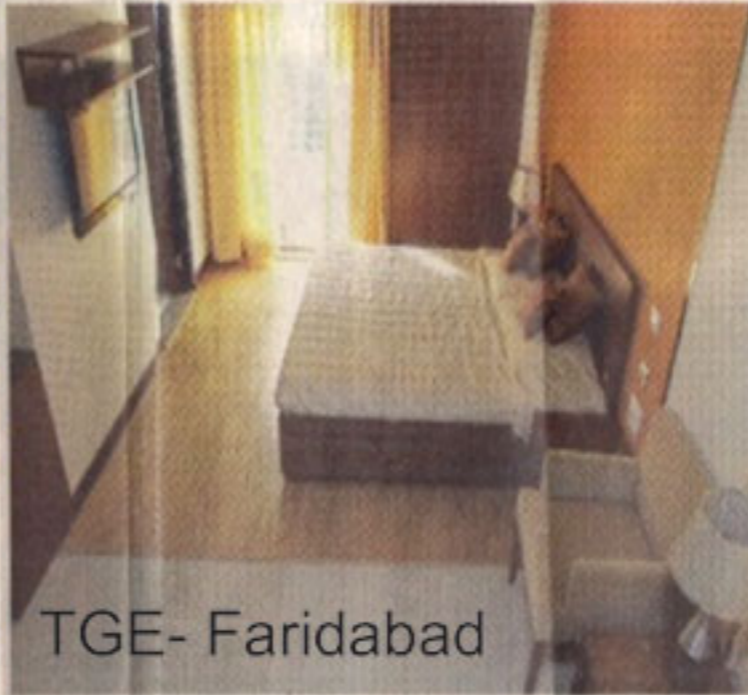
Dilapidated old age homes are giving way to warm, welcoming private condominiums across the nation. It's the golden victory of fulfilment over banishment, as these new havens for the elderly focus on the company of like-minded people and constructive activities, all in world-class comfort.

One such society is the Golden Estate coming up in Faridabad. "Our property draws inspiration from the traditional joint family," says Amit Vaidya, Director, Golden Estate. The sprawling estate upholds another age-old concept, the *mohalla*, with multiple blocks of residential units. "I am a single woman and my children are married. Though they repeatedly ask me to stay with them, I could never agree to that. I enjoy my independence and privacy and at the same time have company of my fellow mates," says 65-year-old Sheila Balyan.

Another such retirement project is the Utsav residential complexes. With properties in Lavasa, Bhiwadi and Jaipur, they spell warmth, loyalty and trust. The 15-acre resorts are beautifully landscaped, and far from the urban sprawl. "This is the perfect answer to all our hobbies and interests," says P K Pandey, 53, a resident of Utsav Jaipur.

Social changemakers like Dr Sheilu Sreenivasan, founder president, Dignity Foundation and Dignity Lifestyle

Women inmates catch up on the news at the library of Sobha Hermitage



TGE- Faridabad



Retirement Township near Mumbai, are helping the elderly lead productive lives. "We have addressed ourselves to providing an array of opportunities for 'productive ageing'," she says.

In Coimbatore, Melur Meadows offers a blend of rural ambience for health, and modern amenities for comfort, and flexible options of buying, leasing or renting for a month to a few years. On the same lines is Godhuli Estate, in the northern fringes of Kolkata, that comes with gardens, library, gym, elevator and other facilities at an affordable rate.

The Sobha Hermitage, located at Panniyankara, near Vadakkencherry,

(Clockwise from top) Inner view, rooms and kitchen of Sobha Hermitage; Amit Vaidya, Director, Golden Estate

BY THE YEAR

ASHIANA UTSAV, BHIWADI
₹18,47,600-32,86,800

ASHIANA UTSAV, JAIPUR
₹18,65,467-25,55,800

ASHIANA UTSAV, LAVASA
₹26,12,416-80,11,350

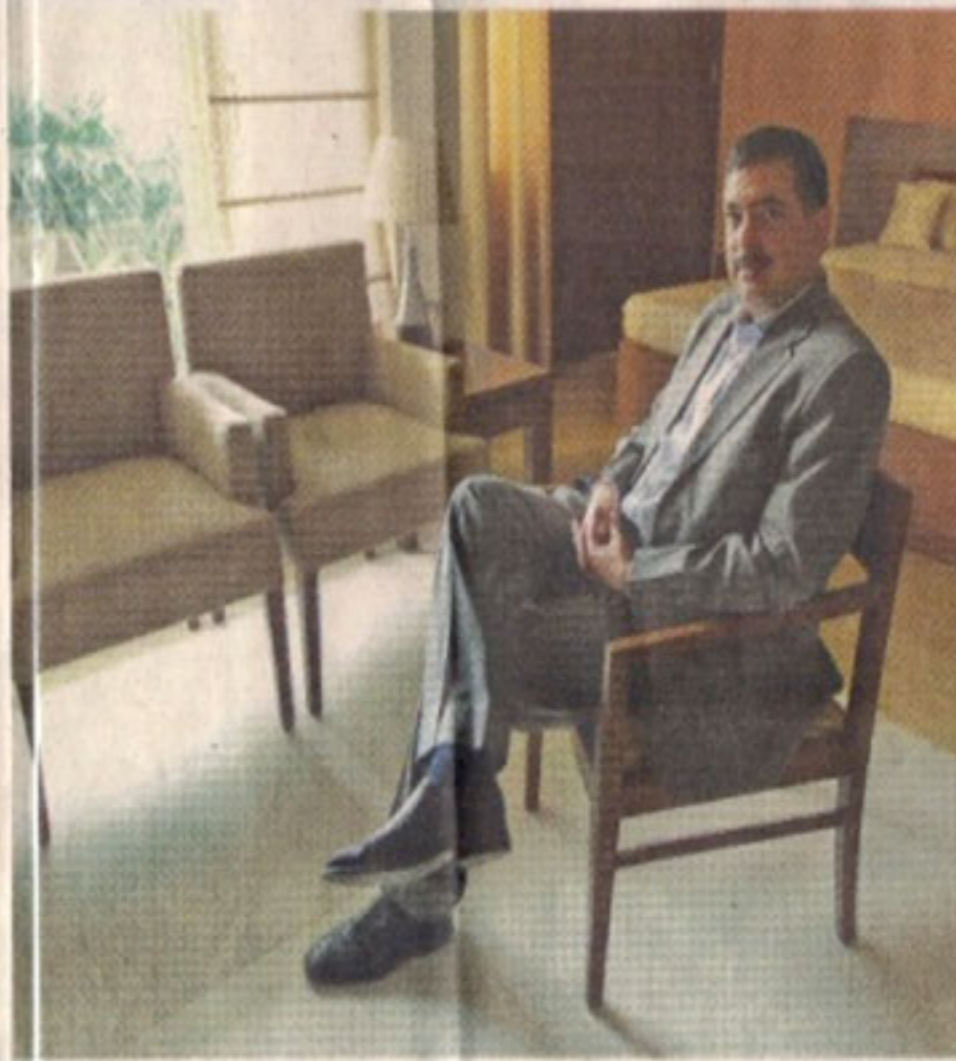
GODHULI
₹82,000-2,14,000

DIGNITY LIFESTYLE
₹9-13 lakh

MELUR MEADOWS
₹4,000-11,600 (per month)

GOLDEN ESTATE
₹15-26 lakh

SOBHA HERMITAGE
Free



was set up in 2006 to cater to senior citizens, and young widows and their children. This was the first social responsibility initiative of Sobha Developers Limited, under the CSR wing, and the Kurumba Trust. "The food is vegetarian, there's a ban on alcohol, smoking, and plastics," says the head of the Social Empowerment department of the Kurumba Trust, Dr V A Gangadharan.

Ananthasubramaniam and his wife, Paravathy, 74, have been living at the Hermitage for the past four years. "We did not want to trouble anyone. Moreover, we have medical support, and are very comfortable here," says the former employee of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre at Mumbai.

Near Hyderabad, Ramana Rao (82), who joined V-Care old age home last year, is a happy man. He spends his time watching TV, reading books and teaching classical music. Rao says he likes his new home and prefers staying here for the rest of his life. "This place promises me security, apart from peace and joy with fellow inmates," Rao says. He had recently collapsed, and the staff at the home informed his family and rushed him to a private hospital, paying his bills until his kin arrived.