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Welfare schemes mark Mata's birthday fete

Staff Reporter



Union Minister for Transport and Highways Oscar Fernandes presenting the Amrita Keerthi Puraskar to writer Manoj Das at Amritapuri on Friday. Mata Amritanandamayi is present. Photo: C. Suresh Kumar The Hindu

Spiritual leader Mata Amritanandamayi has said that increasing complexities of life in the modern era warrant a “revolution of the internal self” in order to shed selfishness and kindle the spirit of service.

Delivering the customary address at her 60th birthday celebrations at Amritapuri, near here, on Friday, the Mata exhorted people, especially the youth, to eschew ostentation and work for the welfare of society. Rein in your desires if you desire happiness. Sadness is ephemeral, ameliorate it.

Modern technology, for all its advantages, should not make the young generation slaves of new-age gadgets. “Take, for instance, the Internet... it is highly beneficial, but it should not be dictating terms in our life.”

Friday's celebrations began with a satsang by Mata Amritanandamayi Math vice chairman Swami Amritaswarupananda. He led the customary Pada puja after the Mata delivered her address.

Union Minister for Transport and Highways Oscar Fernandes presented this year's national-level Amrita Keerthi Puraskar to writer Manoj Das and the State-level Amrita Keerthi Puraskar to Vedic scholar Thuravur Viswambharan.

Mr. Fernandes launched the Amrita Swasrayagramam, a scheme of the math to adopt 101 villages across the country. The Rs.50-crore Uttarakhand relief and rehabilitation scheme was launched by Union Minister of State for Labour Kodikunnil Suresh.

Under the village adoption programme, the math will provide basic facilities such as schools, drinking water, and health care to the adopted villages. It will construct 500 houses in Uttarkashi and Rudraprayag in Uttarakhand for those who lost houses in the recent natural calamity.

At the function, the Mata launched the e-learning project ‘Amrita RITE - Rural India Tablet Education’ by handing over a tablet to Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development Shashi Tharoor. The math's financial assistance of Rs.1 lakh each to the families of nine persons killed in a boat tragedy in Alappuzha early this year was distributed by Mr. Tharoor.

Marking the occasion, the Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi, unveiled a package providing free surgeries for Rs.50 crore to the poor. The package includes free kidney transplants, cardiac surgeries, and cancer treatment. Maharashtra Governor K. Sankaranarayanan and Mr. Fernandes gave away the certificates for treatment to the beneficiaries. The other dignitaries who attended the function included Union Minister of State for Food and Civil Supplies K.V. Thomas, Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation K.C. Venugopal, Finance Minister K.M. Mani, Health

Minister V.S. Sivakumar, Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Tribes P.K. Jayalakshmi, and Food and Civil Supplies Minister Anoop Jacob. Birthday greetings from President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh were read out on the occasion.

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