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Isha extends helping hand in rural areas

L.N. Revathy

Coimbatore , Feb. 3

A PLAN to rejuvenate rural India has been rolled out jointly by Isha and Times Foundation.

The multi-faceted project entitled `Action for Rural Rejuvenation' is aimed at revitalising the human spirit and bringing about a transformation in the rural human populace. "It is an inner-engineering project," the founder of Isha, Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, told *Business Line*.

Initiated about four months ago, the project, in its first phase, is addressing the health problems in rural areas. "The first mobile clinic with 10 trucks with a team of volunteers commenced service in October last. The interior of the truck has been customised as a health clinic. Trained nurses, a pharmacist and a yoga teacher assist the medical professionals (all volunteers). The mobile dispensaries also guide the rural populace on home remedies for self-care and self-sufficiency. Our volunteers spend a fortnight in the field, visiting one village after another. One truck covers 60 to 70 villages in 30 days," he said.

He explained that a service vehicle aided the operation of each fleet of four mobile health clinics serving within an operational zone. "The vehicle not only aids in the overall project's operation, but also acts as a satellite dispensary for remote villages separated from healthcare not by distance but rugged terrain," Jaggi Vasudev said.

"We are planning to initiate 1,800 trucks in a span of 10 years. By 2005, we hope to put 100 trucks on track. It is a costly

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exercise and we need a dedicated team to take the message across," he said, and disclosed that Isha Foundation was in talks with automobile manufacturers seeking some relief.

"We are trying to rope in corporates. As of now, some volunteers and renowned corporates have sponsored 30 trucks. But our recurring costs are mounting - costing close to Rs 40 lakh on purchase of medicines, fuel and incidental expenses. The service extended by the dedicated workforce, however, cannot be quantified," he added.

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