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## Maharashtra: New beginning awaits 25 differently-abled patients at Karjat rehab centre

Dr Bharat Vatwani, the founder trustee of Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation and Magsaysay award winner, expressed hope that the patients on the path of recovery would soon be reunited with their families.



After a nearly two-hour drive, the patients, along with five social workers and support staff, reached the centre at Karjat. (Express)

It is going to be a new dawn for the 25 differently-abled patients from government-run mental hospitals and other private healthcare facilities in [Chennai](#) who have travelled all the way to a Karjat-based rehabilitation centre, near [Pune](#) in Maharashtra.

As they alighted from the train at Pune railway station Wednesday a bus from Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation was waiting outside to welcome the patients, who are on the recovery path. After a nearly two-hour drive, the patients, along with five social workers and support staff, reached the centre at Karjat.

They will be reunited with their families soon, Dr Bharat Vatwani, founder trustee of Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation and Magsaysay award winner told [The Indian Express](#).

The foundation, set up in 1988, has reunited at least 9,000 differently-abled persons with their families in the last 15-16 years, said Dr Vatwani who added that this was for the first time a large group of patients have been shifted from a mental hospital to our rehabilitation centre.

The centre was started to deal with differently-abled destitute persons wandering on the streets. Hence, the foundation does not admit patients brought by family members. It set up the Karjat project in 2006. Services at the foundation are free of charge.

“These are unfortunate men and women whom you often see wandering on roads, lost in their own world, laughing and talking to themselves, with dirty long matted hair, half naked and skinny in appearance. They survive on gutter water and leftovers of food thrown at them by passers-by. With no one to look after them they are on the roads for weeks and months together,” Dr Vatwani said.

The foundation has tied up with various mental institutions across the country. The latest batch of 25 patients is mainly from north India and they find it difficult to communicate due to limited knowledge of the language.

“These patients were selected from different institutions in Tamil Nadu, including the government-run Institute of Mental Health Chennai and Emergency Care and Recovery Centre, Chennai, and others like Anbagam NGO Tamil Nadu and St Giuseppe Moscati Psycho-Social Rehabilitation Centre Tamil Nadu by our team. The social workers in Tamil Nadu find it a challenge to communicate with them due to language barriers. However, they are on their path to recovery and we will now try to reunite the 25 patients with their families,” Dr Vatwani said.

Meanwhile, several organisations in Pune will host a series of programmes on the occasion of World Mental Health Day which falls on October 10 to create awareness about mental health. Dr Mridula Apte, a clinical psychologist who heads Vidula Psychological Consultancy, said her firm will conduct an awareness programme in association with the Pune Metro Rail to inform citizens of the facts related to mental health.

This year’s theme of the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) is to make mental health and well-being a global priority. A recent report shows that the world is failing in ‘our duty of care’ to protect the mental health, and well-being of healthcare workers. ‘Our duty of care’ is a global call for action to protect the mental health of health and care workers. It examines the impact of the Covid pandemic on the mental health of the health and care workforce and offers 10 policy actions as a framework for immediate follow-up by employers, organizations and policy-makers.

A report by the Qatar Foundation, World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), in collaboration with the WHO finds that at least a quarter of health and care workers surveyed have reported anxiety, depression and burnout symptoms.

The report found that 23 to 46 per cent of health and care workers reported symptoms of anxiety during the Covid pandemic and 20 to 37 per cent experienced depressive symptoms. Burnout among health and care workers during the pandemic ranged from 41 to 52 per cent in pooled estimates as per the report.