



Gulf News

CHARITY LENDS A HELPING HAND TO MAIMED KERALA GIRL

By Ashraf Padanna

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Thaw in Indo-Pak relations reached its humanitarian heights last year when Noor Fatima, the little Pakistani girl, underwent a successful heart surgery in Bangalore .Now, a Houston-based Pakistani charity has come to the rescue of a Kerala girl whose right arm was sheared from the shoulder during a road accident three years back .

House of Charity (HoC) headed by well-known Pakistani philanthropist Hashmat Effendy spent Rs2mn for 7-year-old Akhila for her trip and treatment in the US .HoC, which is already involved in similar activities in Kerala, has also agreed to sponsor her entire treatment until she turns 20 .

Akhila reached back home with an artificial arm on Wednesday after three-month-long treatment in the US. She needs to take four more trips for treatment and modifications on the artificial arm as she grows up .George Abraham, president of the Houston-based Non-Resident Keralites Association who accompanied Akhila along with the HoC nurse Philomina George, said Effendy plans to spend Rs400mn this year for upgrading charity hospitals, for anti-Aids campaign and for medical camps in Kerala hospitals by the US plastic surgery and orthopaedic prosthetic experts.

A shipment of advanced medical equipment donated by the HoC to these hospitals will arrive in Kerala in a couple of months, he told journalists here yesterday. Akhila was travelling in a bus on September 11, 2000 with her family when it collided with another vehicle. K Buhari, father of the girl, has knocked all the available doors for help, including President A P J Abdul Kalam's office, which offered aid if treated in India. Unfortunately, doctors at the prestigious Artificial Limb Centre in Pune suggested the kind of amputation and artificial arm replacement that Akhila requires was not available in India and the girl should be taken to the US or Germany . Keralites in the US took notice of the story run by the Malayalam newspapers and television channels about the traumatised family of Buhari, a primary schoolteacher, who lost all hope .

They approached Effendy who volunteered to extend any help for the treatment that included extensive work in fabrication of the body-powered shoulder disarticulation prosthesis. Though many children from Pakistan received the healing touch from the HoC in the past, Akhila is the first child from India it selected for medical treatment in the US under its Healing the Children Program .

Writing with her left hand, Akhila had bagged the second rank in a national school scholarship examination last year. The airport in Kochi where the child arrived witnessed moving scenes as she joined the waiting family-her father Buhari, mother Sajna, elder sister Ameena, uncle Nissar and his wife Safeena-with tears rolling out. Hashmat Effendy has another Indian connection. During her childhood, she wanted to become a powerful leader like the late Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, only to cure all the sick and deserving children in the world (www.houseofcharity.com)

She wrote a letter to the prime minister about her mission. To her surprise, she received a reply with a birthday present – both shared a common birthday of November 19.
