

HIGHLIGHTS FOR AUGUST 2007

BENGAL SHRACHI HOUSING DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

DIRECT NEWS

ROSEDALE GARDEN COMPLEX

- Appeared in The Hindustan Times [Homes]
- Appeared in The Telegraph [Propertt]
- Appeared in Realty Plus

6th Greenwood Spirit Theatre Festival

- Appeared in Bartaman
- Appeared in Grihashova

CORPORATE PROFILING: BENGAL SHRACHI HOUSING DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

- Appeared in Business Standard
- Appeared in The Economic Times
- Appeared in Marwar

SNAPSHOTS

Real Estate and IT are two of the top sectors this month that have been most aggressively pursued by venture capital funds, including foreign venture capital investors. We also observe a serious change in the ad spent of real estate developers, who now form the second largest group of advertisers in the country after educational institutions. They are now pumping in larger sums of money into advertisements for public issues. The increasing demand for professionalism and growing competitiveness in the real estate sector has led top realty firms to provide lucrative offers to employees to recruit & sustain them.

DLF gets environment nod for India's largest mall - DLF Ltd has received environmental approval for developing the mall of India project - slated to be the country's largest mall - at a total cost of up to Rs 2,000 cr.

It's a deal - After the advent of top class developers and investors, its' now turn of market intermediaries to make their presence felt in the Kolkata property market. Some brokerage firms also intend to recruit and train the local brokers and use them as local agents in the Kolkata market. The immediate impact of this on the real estate market, as experts foresee, will be a sea change in the way the property brokerage market operates.

DLF launches IT Park at Gandhinagar - DLF Ltd has launched its first IT SEZ at Gandhinagar. The Realty major is developing state-of-the-art, world class facilities in Gandhinagar on 25 acres of land. The SEZ project is coming up at an estimated cost of Rs 850 cr and will be developed over two phases.

Realtors now foray into Tier IV cities - Real estate developers are now talking vociferously about developments coming up in Tier IV cities and towns. Some of the Tier IV cities in the country include Ferozabad, Shahjahanbad, Sikandarabad, Bijnore, Rajpura, Dhanbad, Asansol etc.

Centre to push for online realty sales - Forget stock markets for a moment, demat could be the next buzz word for India's realty deals. In what could turn out to be a major step forward in making real estate sales far more transparent, Rajasthan Govt has taken an innovative approach to dematerializing property transactions.

DLF bags Durgapur township contract - real estate major DLF has bagged the contract for the 90 - acre integrated Greenfield Township at City Centre, Durgapur from ADDA. The company will develop the project at an estimated investment of Rs 4,000 cr. Land for the township will be provided by ADDA.

More than just Nooks with a view - Calcutta Riverside is a 262 - acre project in Batanagar and unlike other IT parks, the developers promise that the environment will not be a claustrophobic concrete jungle. Designed by 6 prominent architects from across the country, the goal of Calcutta Riverside Township project is to replicate old Calcutta architecture in a manner that is contextual to present times.

Mall with focus on fine food - Silver Arcade, Calcutta's first retail format focused primarily on fine F&B, next to Spring Club and the Silver Spring Condo complex is ready to open its doors to a clutch of top - notch taste - bud ticklers. The concept of mini mall

evolved from the growing exclusivity of the location, with two more 5 -star hotels about to come up.

DLF lands Rs 1,600 - cr deal - DLF is set to close the SBM real estate deal with DCM Shriram Consolidated for over Rs 1,600 cr. This will be the largest private sector land deal in the country, and will give the DLF access to about 38 acres of prime land at just about 4-5 km from Connaught Place. DLF had earlier bought about 25 acres of land adjacent to the SBM plot in 2005 and already has an in-principle approval to develop an IT SEZ on this land.

Emami Realty plans to invest Rs 700 cr in 3 years - Emami Realty has lined up Rs 700 cr for 10 of its real estate projects in Kolkata, Coimbatore and Hyderabad. The projects will be completed in 2010-11 with an estimated payback period of 3 years.

Infinity InfoTech bags Rs 70 - cr deal for city project - The West Bengal Govt has gone a step forward in developing its showcase chip design facility in Kolkata, christened the India Design Centre. City - based IT Infrastructure Development firm Infinity InfoTech Parks Ltd has bagged estimated Rs 70 - cr deal to construct an IDC facility.

Parsvnath Developers entering telecom sector - Parsvnath Developer Ltd is forming a SPV to foray into the mobile services space. The company has submitted applications to the Department of Telecom for providing unified access service in 22 telecom circles across the country.

Realty firms develop staff strength - The increasing demand for professionalism and growing competitiveness in the real estate sector has led top realty firms to bring in advanced in-house training programmes for their employees. Top realty players such as Omaxe, Ansal, Parsvnath Developers, and Unitech organize such programmes on a regular basis to be in step with ever changing dynamics of the sector.

Space group plans new projects in Kolkata, Chennai - Kolkata - based Space Group, the real estate developer specializing in developing clubs, life-style based residences, and shopping malls has lined up an estimated investment of close to Rs 225 cr in Kolkata and Rs 350 cr in Chennai over the next three years.

Shapoorji Palonji wins IT Park deal - Shapoorji Palonji has won the Rs 200 - cr IT park contract in Bidhanagar, Durgapur. The IT Park will be finished in next three years. The proposed IT park will house plug - and - play offices on a total 10-12 lakh sq ft area.

Paint majors ride the real estate boom - Riding on the back of the real estate boom, paint companies are extremely bullish on India, which is amongst the fastest growing markets across the globe.

Real estate Corporates take the merger avenue - A strong wave of merger mania seems to have gripped Corporates in the real estate sector. Over half - a - dozen Corporates, who are in the process of raising funds, are merging their real estate subsidiaries with parent companies to create value. These companies are either merging their real estate subsidiaries or SPVs with themselves.

Shapoorji Pallonji foraying into 'S - commerce' - Shapoorji Pallonji Group plans to set up an e - commerce based consumer services chain throughout the country. The Group would have a substantial stake in the venture which is expected to entail an investment of Rs 150 cr over the next 3 years. The Group calls the stream of business a 'S-Commerce'.

Realty, IT grab major share of venture capital funds - Real Estate and IT are two of the top sectors that have been most aggressively pursued by venture capital funds, including foreign venture capital investors. Real estate, which has lately drawn considerable attention from retail and institutional investors, has topped the charts with Rs 2,788 cr in all.

Realty ads ride IPO boom- A serious change is visible in the ad spent of real estate developers, who now form the second largest group of advertisers in the country after educational institutions. Now they are pumping in larger sums of money into advertisements for public issues.

State plans one - stop IT logistics centers - The West Bengal Govt, which is eyeing 15% of the country's IT revenues by calendar 2010 has firmed up plans to beef up IT support facilities in the state to spur growth. With an eye on this, the state Govt intends to set up one-stop IT logistics centers in Saltlake Sector V, Rajarhat, Kalyani, Siliguri and Durgapur.

The IT logistics centers will provide plug- and - play secretarial service for IT/ ITes professionals and other logistics support for their business needs.

Bengal's mega housing projects attract FDI in a big way - FDI in large acquisition projects in West Bengal is quietly happening in a big way. The New York - based NRI entrepreneur, Indrajit De, jointly with London - based REIT Asset Management Company, has chalked out plans to invest close to Rs 2,000 cr in Bengal in the next few years, and has rolled out two mega housing projects - one each in North and South Kolkata.

Debut in 36 months - The first phase of Calcutta Riverside, the Rs 1400 - cr Batanagar makeover project, with 370 apartments and golf villas and a 400 - bed cardiac hospital, will be ready in 36 months. A 25 acre IT - based SEZ to incorporate 1.5 million sq ft of built space, a 440, 000 sq ft retail mall and a four - star business hotel are among other highlight of the project.

COMPETITORS IN NEWS

DLF INDIA LIMITED

DLF - JP Morgan Securities has initiated coverage on DLF with an overweight rating and a net asset value based price target of Rs 725, saying the stock was likely to emerge as a proxy plan on the real estate sector.

DLF gets environment nod for India's largest mall - DLF Ltd has received environmental approval for developing the mall of India project - slated to be the country's largest mall - at a total cost of up to Rs 2,000 cr.

DLF launches IT Park at Gandhinagar - DLF Ltd has launched its first IT SEZ at Gandhinagar. The Realty major is developing state-of-the-art, world class facilities in Gandhinagar on 25 acres of land. The SEZ project is coming up at an estimated cost of Rs 850 cr and will be developed over two phases.

DLF - Fraport to bid for Greater Noida Airport - The DLF group had earlier tied up with Fraport to develop airports in India and has now stated that it will bid for the greater Noida Airport when the process will be set in motion in few months time.

DLF bags Durgapur township contract - real estate major DLF has bagged the contract for the 90 - acre integrated Greenfield Township at City Centre, Durgapur from ADDA. The company will develop the project at an estimated investment of Rs 4,000 cr. Land for the township will be provided by ADDA.

Reliance, Mahindra, DLF form panel - Faced with large scale political and farmers' opposition, about 50 SEZ developers, including Reliance Industries & DLF, have formed their own panel under the aegis of Export Promotion Council for EoUs and SEZs.

DLF lands Rs 1,600 - cr deal - DLF is set to close the SBM real estate deal with DCM Shriram Consolidated for over Rs 1,600 cr. This will be the largest private sector land deal in the country, and will give the DLF access to about 38 acres of prime land at just about 4-5 km from Connaught Place. DLF had earlier bought about 25 acres of land adjacent to the SBM plot in 2005 and already has an in-principle approval to develop an IT SEZ on this land.

DLF- India's largest realtor DLF today announced it would invest up to Rs. 1,700 crores on setting up an IT park. The IT park would come up on a sprawling 8.5 million sq. feet area in multi model international passenger and cargo hub project in the city.

Twin policies end stalemate over DLF township- The Standoff between the land and land reform and the urban development department over DLF's mega township project in Dankuni is likely to end following the L& LR department's decision to adopt a twin and simultaneous approach of both acquisition and direct purchase of 4,840 acres for the project.

DLF to invest Rs. 3,500 crore in Rajasthan- Real estate giant DLF will invest Rs. 3,500 crore in Rajasthan as it plans to develop convention centre, hotel and retail space and hotel management institute in the state.

The next Boomtown- DLF has acquired 95 acres in the heart of the industrial town that was laid out in the '50's by the American Architects, Joseph Allen Stein and Benjamin Polk, paying Rs. 35lakh per acre.

DLF assets mulls listing to quench \$ 1 bn-a-yr appetite- DLF asset private ltd, the real estate management company promoted by DLF group, is planning to list in India or abroad in next few months.

Hines signs pact with DLF- International Real estate firm Hines, and DLF ltd have signed a memorandum of understanding to form a venture to develop a major office tower within master planned, mixed use complex in Gurgaon.

DLF land deal - DLF has bagged a 25 - acre property in Hyderabad for about Rs 450 cr. The realty firm plans to invest another Rs 750 cr to develop the property which would either be an IT park or an IT SEZ.

DLF to bridge the labor gap with Gulf - based Indians - To get over the problems of skilled labor shortage, DLF is planning to bring thousands of Indians working in the Gulf. The plan is to create a dedicated labor force of up to 25,000 construction workers and employ them on a contractual basis.

DLF to build 5 - star hotel in Gurgaon - DLF will develop a 250 - room super luxury five - star hotel with premium brand four - seasons Hotels & resorts in Gurgaon at an investment of RS 600 crore. The hotel project will be developed in around 10 acre land at DLF Golfink in Gurgaon by DLF Hotels.

SOBHA DEVELOPERS

Sobha developers' plans hospitality projects in South - Following its recent foray in lifestyle retailing, realty major Sobha Developers is now planning hospitality projects in South India. The company has acquired land in Bangalore, Mysore, Kochi and Thrissur, where it plans to set up luxury hotels with a total of 600 rooms.

Sobha Developers to sign MoU for hi-tech city in Kochi - Sobha Developers Ltd is setting up a Rs 5,000 cr hi-tech city project in Kochi to create an integrated city of world class standards with a focus on R&D, knowledge dissemination, electronics, IT and pure and applied sciences. The project which will be completed in 8 years will come up in Maradu near Kochi in an area of around 400 acres.

EMAMI REALTY

Emami Realty plans to invest Rs 700 cr in 3 years - Emami Realty has lined up Rs 700 cr for 10 of its real estate projects in Kolkata, Coimbatore and Hyderabad. The projects will be completed in 2010-11 with an estimated payback period of 3 years.

PARSVNATH DEVELOPERS LIMITED

Parsvnath's Indore SEZ notified - Parsvnath Developers Ltd plan to set up SEZ are ready to take off with the Govt notifying its 76 - acre IT and ITes SEZ in Indore entailing an investment of Rs 1,400 cr.

Parsvnath Developers entering telecom sector - Parsvnath Developer Ltd is forming a SPV to foray into the mobile services space. The company has submitted applications to the Department of Telecom for providing unified access service in 22 telecom circles across the country.

MANTRI REALTY

Mantri Realty plans Rs 2,500 cr foray into hospitality - Mantri Realty will foray into the hospitality business and has drawn up plans to set up 2 5-star hotels and a clutch of three-and four-star hotels across the country by 2010.

SHAPOORJI PALLONJI LIMITED

Shapoorji Palonji wins IT Park deal - Shapoorji Palonji has won the Rs 200 - cr IT park contract in Bidhanagar, Durgapur. The IT Park will be finished in next three years. The proposed IT park will house plug - and - play offices on a total 10-12 lakh sq ft area.

Shapoorji Pallonji foraying into 'S - commerce' - Shapoorji Pallonji Group plans to set up an e - commerce based consumer services chain throughout the country. The Group would have a substantial stake in the venture which is expected to entail an investment of Rs 150 cr over the next 3 years. The Group calls the stream of business a 'S-Commerce'.

Afcon Infrastructure defers public offer - The Mumbai - based construction major Afcons Infrastructure, a member of the Shapoorji Pallonji group, has postponed its IPO, despite a go ahead from the market regulator SEBI.

PURAVANKARA PROJECTS LIMITED

Puravankara's IPO gets poor retail response - The IPO of Puravankara Projects was subscribed 1.91 times as per data available on the exchange websites. The IPO received bids for over 4.09 cr shares against the issue size of 2.14 cr shares.

OMAXE CONSTRUCTIONS LIMITED

Concrete Dreams- Delhi-based developer Omaxe has entered into a 50:50 joint venture with Israel-based Azorim Investment Development 1.26 million sq ft of land situated in Surajkund, near Faridabad. It will add upto Rs 800 crore to Omaxe's topline for FY08.

RAHEJA DEVELOPERS

Rahejas to build premium townships in Gurgaon - Raheja Developers have announced the launch of group housing schemes with 6,000 apartments, spread over various sectors of Gurgaon at affordable prices.

EMAAR MGF

Hamptons - EmaarMGF to set up shop in India - Hamptons International, a premiere residential sales agent, will begin operations in India with initial plans to set up offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad by end 2007. Hampton's entry into India is a result of an initiative by EmaarMGF, which has 40%, rights over Hampton's worldwide operations.

ANSAL PROPERTIES INDIA LIMITED

Ansal Properties, IL&FS Invest pact - Real Estate Company APIL has signed an agreement with IL&FS to develop township and IT SEZ in Gurgaon spread over 11 million sq ft of office and residential space.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Home Loan rate cut? Forget it - Home loans are unlikely to turn expensive despite the increase in cash reserve ratio, which will make money scarce for banks. The RBI has raised

CRR by 50 basis points to 7%, built a large section of bankers do not expect lending rates, including home loan rates, to go up.

Realty, IT grab major share of venture capital funds - Real Estate and IT are two of the top sectors that have been most aggressively pursued by venture capital funds, including foreign venture capital investors. Real estate, which has lately drawn considerable attention from retail and institutional investors, has topped the charts with Rs 2,788 cr in all.

Watch on high exposure in capital market, realty - The RBI will keep a watchful eye on banks, which have high exposure to the capital market and real estate sector. The outstanding loan to commercial real estate jumped 69.7% to Rs 46, 295 cr as on May 25, 2007.

Venture capitalists wary of real estate - The RBI's effort to restrict the flow of funds into the real estate sector and the Centre's budgetary measures, specifying nine areas for venture capital investors to get tax incentives on investments, seems to pay desired result.

Property expo in Kochi - Kerala Builders Forum is organizing a Property Expo 2007 on August 3 to 5 at Marine Drive Grounds. A total of 41 builders and FIIs are participating in the expo.

Space group plans new projects in Kolkata, Chennai - Kolkata - based Space Group, the real estate developer specializing in developing clubs, life-style based residences, and shopping malls has lined up an estimated investment of close to Rs 225 cr in Kolkata and Rs 350 cr in Chennai over the next three years.

Realtors now foray into Tier IV cities - Real estate developers are now talking vociferously about developments coming up in Tier IV cities and towns. Some of the Tier IV cities in the country include Ferozabad, Shahjahanbad, Sikandarabad, Bijnore, Rajpura, Dhanbad, Asansol etc.

It's a deal - After the advent of top class developers and investors, its' now turn of market intermediaries to make their presence felt in the Kolkata property market. Some

brokerage firms also intend to recruit and train the local brokers and use them as local agents in the Kolkata market. The immediate impact of this on the real estate market, as experts foresee, will be a sea change in the way the property brokerage market operates.

Real estate Corporates take the merger avenue - A strong wave of merger mania seems to have gripped Corporates in the real estate sector. Over half - a - dozen Corporates, who are in the process of raising funds, are merging their real estate subsidiaries with parent companies to create value. These companies are either merging their real estate subsidiaries or SPVs with themselves.

Realty now on shaky terrain - As Puravankara Projects announced its plans to lower its' price band to generate interest trickled into the market, investors and analysts have started voicing their concerns over the price buildup and bubble in the real estate sector.

Realty firms develop staff strength - The increasing demand for professionalism and growing competitiveness in the real estate sector has led top realty firms to bring in advanced in-house training programmes for their employees. Top realty players such as Omaxe, Ansal, Parsvnath Developers, and Unitech organize such programmes on a regular basis to be in step with ever changing dynamics of the sector.

Bangalore firm In4velocity to tap Kolkata real estate market - In4velocity plans to tap the growing real estate market here for its unique Enterprise Resource Management System application, In4Suite RE.

More than just Nooks with a view - Calcutta Riverside is a 262 - acre project in Batanagar and unlike other IT parks, the developers promise that the environment will not be a claustrophobic concrete jungle. Designed by 6 prominent architects from across the country, the goal of Calcutta Riverside Township project is to replicate old Calcutta architecture in a manner that is contextual to present times.

Mall with focus on fine food - Silver Arcade, Calcutta's first retail format focused primarily on fine F&B, next to Spring Club and the Silver Spring Condo complex is ready to open its doors to a clutch of top - notch taste - bud ticklers. The concept of mini mall evolved from the growing exclusivity of the location, with two more 5 -star hotels about to come up.

In4velocity eyes realty software biz - The surge in the real estate sector has triggered off the need for developing enterprise resource management software that would take care of 360 degree requirements of the developers. In4Suite RE is equipped to help the developer or client to automate business processing right from land acquisition to engineering, from purchase to sales, and from rental to property management.

China tightens rules on foreign property investors - China is tightening its grip once more on foreign investors in Chinese real estate, banning them from borrowing offshore in the latest effort to tame property process and cool the economy.

Singapore companies in real estate rush- Property prices in India are rising fast, and not just in the biggest cities. As the tech boom spreads countrywide, as more Indians buy homes, and as the economy grows faster every year, real estate is attracting more investors many of them from abroad.

Saffron to float Rs 300 cr domestic real estate fund - Saffron Asset Advisors, which manages investments of NYSE Euronext - listed real estate investment company Yatra Capital, is planning to raise a domestic realty fund of Rs 300 cr and a bouquet of offshore sector specific funds in logistics, hospitality, health care, retirement homes and infrastructure.

Paint majors ride the real estate boom - Riding on the back of the real estate boom, paint companies are extremely bullish on India, which is amongst the fastest growing markets across the globe.

Centre explores PPP route in urban projects - The Finance Ministry has asked the Urban Development Ministry to review the urban infrastructure projects coming from states for funding under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal mission. After roads, it is the urban development projects undertaken in states that need the Govt's support in the form of viability gap funding.

Home loan direct sellers may soon be history - The paradigm of home loan marketing is set for a change. The practice of using ordinary direct selling agents by home loan financiers will soon be history. This is aimed at protecting the interest of scores of home

loan borrowers and insulates them from frauds. The proposed system will allow them to take informed decisions.

Infinity InfoTech bags Rs 70 - cr deal for city project - The West Bengal Govt has gone a step forwarding developing its showcase chip design facility in Kolkata, christened the India Design Centre. City - based IT Infrastructure Development firm Infinity InfoTech Parks Ltd has bagged estimated Rs 70 - cr deal to construct an IDC facility.

Outsourcing, the new bug to bite realty - The outsourcing bug seems to have bitten the real estate sector as well. With professionals looking into project feasibility, demand and supply analysis, future projections, market conditions as well as PR and brand building, the going has become a lot easier for investors, developers and companies eyeing a piece of the real estate pie.

Mall mania, Highs & Lows - Mall mania is set to touch fever pitch. Two years from now, a silver of south Kolkata will become the city's undisputed shopping and entertainment district, eclipsing the stretch in central Kolkata that held sway for over a century. 4 malls are coming up and nearly half a dozen shopping arcades are coming up between Beckbagan in Park Circus and the intersection of Elgin Road's with Ashutosh Mukherjee Road. Together they will add a whopping 1.6 million sq ft of retail and entertainment space.

Price no bar, FII's raise stake in realty cos- FIIs increased their stake in 15 firms including Unitech, Ansal Housing, D S Kulkarni and Indiabulls real estate. However they have decreased their holding in seven firms including DLF, Era Constructions and Mahindra Gesco.

India-focused real estate IPO from Singapore company- Singapore-based Ascendas India Trust has scored a major first ever initial public offering which raised funds on the Singapore stock exchange with the aim of owning real estate in India.

Realty Show Spices Up- The first quarter results for FY08 has, by and large, reiterated the real estate story. The overall YoY sales of the old listed players have grown 78% compared to a 16% fall on a QoQ basis. This has been the common trend except Mahindra Gesco which clocked a marginal increase of around 3%.

Realty ads ride IPO boom- A serious change is visible in the ad spent of real estate developers, who now form the second largest group of advertisers in the country after educational institutions. Now they are pumping in larger sums of money into advertisements for public issues.

Getting real with real estate- In the last 12 months, 23 real estate companies have raised a whopping \$4.4 billion through IPOs, FPOs, GDRs and other avenues. Apart from the land bank parameter a clear details of its ownership location agreement and title must be known.

High ST: Benetton may enter distribution pact with Trent - Europe's famous fashion house Benetton is likely to enter into a distribution partnership for its premium fashion brand Sisley with Tata Group company Trent. Trent has also signed a deal with DLF for setting up 12 malls, totaling about a million sq feet of space.

PE cos to exit hospitality sector - High property prices and spiraling interest rates are holding back many developers and hospitality funds from writing big cheque for hotel projects in India. Instead PE funds are focusing in other developing markets like Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand.

Realtor LaSalle set to inject \$15bn into Asia in 3 years - Global real estate investor LaSalle Investment Management plans to spend \$15 bn to buy and develop property in Asia over the next 5 to 5 years.

State plans one - stop IT logistics centers - The West Bengal Govt, which is eyeing 15% of the country's IT revenues by calendar 2010 has firmed up plans to beef up IT support facilities in the state to spur growth. With an eye on this, the state Govt intends to set up one-stop IT logistics centers in Saltlake Sector V, Rajarhat, Kalyani, Siliguri and Durgapur. The IT logistics centers will provide plug- and - play secretarial service for IT/ ITes professionals and other logistics support for their business needs.

Property prices - Demand for property has slowed by as much as 30% in lower and middle income housing in the Mumbai suburbs following the series of interest rates hike since January that have seen lending rates rise 125 to 200 basis points this year.

Rate spike hits Mumbai realty - Demand for property has slowed down much by as much as 30% in lower and middle income housing in Mumbai suburbs following the series of interest rate hikes since January that have seen lending rates rise 125 to 200 basis points this year

Fidelity, Franklin hit as real estate funds lose \$13 billion - Fidelity Investments, Franklin Resources Inc and Kensington Investment Group Inc. is the biggest losers in a decline by US real estate funds that wiped out \$13 billion in the past three months.

Commercial realty loans turning costlier - The credit squeeze is still some distance away, but banks, particularly, those in the public sector, have pushed up lending rates to commercial realty above the current benchmark prime lending rates.

Bengal's mega housing projects attract FDI in a big way - FDI in large acquisition projects in West Bengal is quietly happening in a big way. The New York - based NRI entrepreneur, Indrajit De, jointly with London - based REIT Asset Management Company, has chalked out plans to invest close to Rs 2,000 cr in Bengal in the next few years, and has rolled out two mega housing projects - one each in North and South Kolkata.

SEIL plans \$1 - bn township in India - Sheth estate International, the international arm of India - based property developer Sheth Group, is planning to tie up with a Dubai - based developer to construct an integrated township at the cost of \$1 bn in India.

Ground Reality - Banks are now charging 12-12.5%. The larger companies may not find the going hat tough, but smaller builders haven't been so fortunate. They are already forking out interest rates of 15-17% and some are reportedly willing to pay as much as 2% a month to fund operations.

Centre to push for online realty sales - Forget stock markets for a moment, demat could be the next buzz word for India's realty deals. In what could turn out to be a major step forward in making real estate sales far more transparent, Rajasthan Govt has taken an innovative approach to dematerializing property transactions.

Global real estate funds to partner developers for high - rise buildings - With land getting scarcer in Tier I and Tier II cities, international real estate funds, jointly with domestic property developers and real estate companies, are setting up high rise buildings in these cities.

Centre to buy out RBI stake in NHB, Nabard - The Govt plans to buy out RBI stake in National Housing Bank of India's stake in National Housing Bank & Nabard by June next year to eliminate any conflict of interest and to ensure that the central bank does not own the institutions it regulates.

Realty sector likely to ride out subprime crisis - The US subprime credit defaults have become a bugbear for most global markets, though none of them, except for the US market, seems to have been directly impacted by it.

Urban poor can soon access home loans - In a measure that would woo large sections of its vote bank, the Congress - led UPA Govt is working on a plan to offer housing loans to the urban poor at a subsidized rate of 7-8% per annum. It may offer the subsidized rate for a loan up to Rs 1.5 lakh for a 5 - 7 yr period.

Hi- Tech hall for IT hub- Complete wi-fi access, video conferencing with dual data and visual streaming. Internet protocol lines and ISDN catering, acoustic solutions with digital signal processors to cut out voice echo and disturbances. This September, Calcutta will get its largest air- conditioning banqueting arrangement outside star hotels. This is the latest venture from PDK Shenaz Group.

Demand drives - Continuing demand for space will keep the growth of real estate sector at the present level of over 10%, if the economy keeps on growing at 8-9 %. However there could be some correction in the prices. The present correction in prices due to interest rate hike will not last long.

HDFC mops up \$800 mn for realty - HDFC has announced the closing of its first sponsored international real estate fund, HIREF International LLC, after mobilizing \$800 mn. This makes it one of the country's largest international real estate funds.

Debut in 36 months - The first phase of Calcutta Riverside, the Rs 1,400 - cr Batanagar makeover project, with 370 apartments and golf villas and a 400 - bed cardiac hospital, will be ready in 36 months. The project, offers generous living spaces created around the golf course, water bodies and the riverfront. A 25 - acre - IT based SEZ to incorporate 1.5 million sq ft of built space, a 440,000 sq ft retail mall and a 4 - star business hotel are among the other highlights.

Realtors turning unsuccessful malls into commercial buildings - Real estate developers in Mumbai plan to convert their not - so - successful retail malls into commercial office buildings due to high demand for office space from the IT/ ITES, financial services and telecom sectors.

Curb in real estate criticized - Trade and industry has questioned the RBI move to curb lending to the real estate sector. It is feared that the move may have a negative impact on the country's economy. The RBI has directed banks to exercise caution in lending for housing finance and asked them to be more stringent in scrutinizing loan applications.
