

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR MAY 2008

~SHRACHI GROUP~

### DIRECT NEWS

#### Participation in Industry articles:

- The Economic Times
- The Telegraph

#### Coverage on 7<sup>th</sup> Greenwood Spirit Theatre Festival:

- Pratidin
- Sanmarg
- Dainik Statesman

#### Personal profiling of Mr. Rahul Todi:

- Business & Economics
- Graphiti, The Telegraph

### SNAPSHOTS

*Over the last two years, land prices have shown a northward trend. Now, it's time now for a realty check. Record land auction at Mumbai's Bandra-Kurla Complex- like the Rs 46,000 per square ft buy by Wadhwa Builders in November 2007 are passe. The last auction at BKC, by Jet Airways, has seen rates tumbling to Rs 32,000, a drop of a whopping 30% in just about four months. Year 2008 have already seen some setbacks in land prices across Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Chennai and Gurgaon. Most agree that land rates across cities are coming down and deal volumes have decreased. Consultants like JLL claim that land prices at Thane's Waghale Estate has come down from Rs 20 crore an acre about 6-9 months back for an industrial plot to Rs 15 crore, the asking price today. Even at Turbhe and Nerul in Navi Mumbai, rates are down from Rs 18-20 crore an acre to Rs 15 crore. A deal for a housing society at BKC's neighboring Kalina was called off a while back as the Rs 30,000 per sqft price being quoted were too high.*

*In Pune, where landowners weren't willing to negotiate on prices, there has been a 10-20% fall in prices in some areas. In many cases, landowners are sticking to their rates but negotiating in a different way.*

*In Chennai, prices had gone beyond realistic levels, at Kelambakkam on OMR, land value is down from Rs 10 crore to Rs 7-8 crore an acre. Similarly, at Ambattur, land value is down from Rs 10 crore to Rs 6.5 crore an acre. Over the next 6-8 months, the consultants expect a further drop of 10% in Chennai.*

*Even in Gurgaon, things have slowed. According to a consultant, deal volumes have come down considerably and like some other locations, more and more joint development agreements are taking places. The way things are going, the consultant expects a further 10-15% drop in land values in the next six months. Overall, there is a feeling that prices are going to drop further, if the market remains soft for another six months.*

## COMPETITORS IN NEWS

### DLF

**Housing demand helps DLF build 300% net rise in FY08-** Growing demand for houses, offices and hotels helped DLF, India's largest real estate firm, post a 306% growth in consolidated net profit at Rs 7,856 crore for the year to March 31, 2008, against Rs 1,934 crore in 2006-07. The company's consolidated revenue went up by 258% to Rs 14,494 crore from Rs 4,053 crore. Its earning per share (EPS) shot up by 270% to Rs 47.16 from Rs 12.75 in 2006-07.

**DLF Q4 consolidated net at Rs 2,177 crore-** DLF Ltd, India's largest property developer, has reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 2,177 crore on revenues of Rs 4,372 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2008. The growth was driven by strong sales in the premium homes segments.

**On leather hunt: DLF setting up JV co with Italian major Piquadro-** Real estate developer is learnt to be setting up a joint venture company with Italian leather and

luggage accessory major Piquadro to hawk its products in India. This is part of the real estate major's retail strategy to bring in some of the world's leading premium brands across categories into the country.

***DLF, HDIL see jump in open interests-*** Turnover tumbled to its lowest this month to Rs 28943.79 crore against the previous figure of 33,563.9 crore. Nifty May futures finished at 5093 the spot close of 5081.7.

***DLF to revive Singapore IPO*** - DLF will revive and enlarge an initial public offer of its property trust in Singapore because it believes market conditions have improved.

***DLF, Prudential Financial tie-up*** - DLF will start a life insurance venture in India with the US based Prudential Financial Inc by August. DLF will control 74% stake in the JV.

***DLF fines Rs 5 lakh for green law goof*** - DLF has been penalized by the state government with RS 5 lakh - the maximum possible fine - for violating the central government's environment laws at New Town Heights, a cluster of nine-tower condominiums.

## **UNITECH**

***Unitech marches higher-*** The Unitech stocks closed with 10 per cent weekly gain the stock faces immediate resistance at Rs 336 and then at Rs 341. The stock could consolidate sideways between Rs 295 and Rs 340 before attempting to take on the resistance at Rs 360.

***Green Dream*** - Nestled among the verdant greens and bordering a golf course, Karma Lakeland, being developed by Unitech, offers a unique weekend property, away from the humdrum of routined life. The project is located on NH-8, Gurgaon-Masesar Road and will offer 250-300 villas. The project is prices at 6.5crore to Rs 10.5 crore, the villas are being targeted at the ultra niche lot.

***Medium-term downtrend in Unitech*** - It was a week of capitulation for Unitech as it slid helplessly below the support at Rs 245.

## **PARSVNATH DEVELOPERS LTD.**

***Parsvnath sells 30% in Mumbai project-*** Parsvnath Developers has sold 30% stake in a Mumbai project to foreign funds for Rs 1860 crore. Parsvnath will sell 15 per cent stake each in the Kurla bus depot redevelopment project to Euronext-listed Yatra Capital and recently launched Saffron India real estate Fund-I. Both are promoted by UK based fund manager Saffron Assets Advisors.

***Parsvnath developers-*** Parsvnath Developers Ltd unveiled plans for developing the new luxury mall complex at Cannought Place in Delhi. The company has acquired a plot at Kasturba Gandhi Marg through a recently formed subsidiary; Prime Realtors Pvt Ltd. the mall will have a mix of fashion, life style and entertainment.

***Parsvnath may bag Rs 18,500 cr Nanocity deal*** – Parsvnath developers may bag the development rights for one of the India’s biggest infrastructure projects, the Rs 18,500 crore Nano-city to come up in Panchkula in Chandigarh.

***Parsvnath may buy 30% in Nano City*** – Sabeer Bhatia may give some concrete shape to his proposed Nano City project, to be set up near Panchkula in Haryana. He is coming to India on June 9 to finalise the equity structure with real estate player Parsvnath Developers.

#### **EMAAR MGF**

***Emaar MGF Land to put \$ 3bn in properties*** - Emaar MGF Land plans to spend \$3 bn in developing properties in South India over the next few years.

***Emaar MGF announces mega project in Hyderabad*** - Emaar MGF announced the launch of ‘Boulder Hills Golf and Country Club’; its signature master planned integrated world class leisure and Residential community in Hyderabad. The launch of this project with a capital outlay of US \$ 1.4 billion is the first amongst a significant cache of Emaar MGF projects in South India.

#### **OMAXE LTD.**

***Omaxe to invest \$20 bn to build 10 lakh affordable homes*** - Omaxe has lined up a \$20 billion (Rs 80,000 cr) investment to develop 10 lakh ‘affordable’ homes for low-income consumers. The company is planning to offer these housing units, to be developed in the next five years, in a price range of Rs 3-15 lakh per flat.

***Omaxe ties up with Leander Sport*** - Omaxe has tied up with Leander Paes' firm Leander Sport to build and manage spa and fitness centres at five locations in the country. Omaxe will build the centres while Leander Sport will provide architectural design & technology.

***Omaxe net jumps 103%*** - After a year of getting listed, Omaxe Ltd reported a jump of 102.85% in its net profit as Rs 494.87 crore for the fiscal to March 31, 2008, as compared with Rs 243.96 crore in 2006-07. The company's total revenue went up by 60.26% to Rs 20,307.75 crore as against Rs 1,439.92 crore in financial year 2006-07.

## **SIDDHA GROUP**

***Siddha lines up projects*** - Siddha Group will take projects worth Rs 800 cr in the next three to four years for real estate projects in the city. It has joined hands with West Bengal government for floating a JV company to take up infrastructure projects, which includes development of a 35,000 square feet commercial place in Kasba, with a project cost of Rs 20 crore. Currently the company is executing two projects in city: Xanadu & Siddha Pine and two other projects are in pipeline.

***City realtor to focus on studio apartments***- Low-key realtor Siddha Group has decide to focus on the vastly untapped studio apartment segment to cash in on the increasing popularity of the walk-to-work concept among the city's growing IT population. For starter, the city based realty outfit has lines up a 500 unit studio apartment project in Rajarhat, the first phase of which containing 314 units and involving an outlay of Rs 60 crore would be ready by December 2009.

## **ANSAL PROPERTIES**

***Ansal ends pact for mega township***- Almost a year after it signed a MoU with Dubai headquartered Deyaar Development PSC for developing a mega mixed use township in India, Ansal Properties and Infrastructure Ltd informed the BSE that the transaction could not be given effect.

***Ansal scheme under MRTPC scanner***- Ansal Housing residential plots project in Karnal have come under the scanner MRTPC's scanner, as ads promoting the scheme withheld the

true cost of plots while inducing potential buyers to seek loans only from a particular bank.

## **INDIABULLS**

***Indiabulls real estate may cash in on mill assets-*** Indiabulls Real Estate may be closer to a public listing of Indiabulls property Investment Trust in Singapore, with the filing of prospectus with the Monetary Authority of Singapore. This comes soon after the company received an approval from the relevant court in Isle of Man to acquire a 100% stake in Dev Property Development.

***Indiabulls Real Estate plans to list its arm in Singapore-*** Indiabulls Real Estate is planning to make an IPO of real estate investment trust in Singapore. The company said it has filed its prospectus with Monetary Authority of Singapore for its Indiabulls Properties Investment Trust.

***Indiabulls real posts higher net*** - Indiabulls real estate ltd has posted a net profit of Rs 27.82 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2008, compared with Rs 6 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2007. Total income increased to Rs 55.31 crore (14.39 crore).

***IndiaBulls Properties plans \$286 m REIT*** - IndiaBulls Real Estate Ltd, may raise \$388.3 million (\$ 286million) by selling units in a real estate investment trust in Singapore, the first such sale by an Indian Company.

## **OTHERS**

***PE majors to invest \$800 million in Emaar MGF-*** Goldman Sachs, Deutsche Bank and one more financial investor are likely to make a combined investment of \$800 million in the three special purpose vehicles (SPVs) being created by real estate group Emaar MGF. Each SPV will have one financial investor who would hold a minority stake. Emaar MGF is in advanced stage of negotiations with private equity players and is likely to close three separate deals in a month's time. These deals, when they materialize, will be the first major fund flow in the real estate firm since it withdrew its IPO last February. The company is also executing the prestigious commonwealth Games Village Project, where it is developing a 27.7 acre integrated township in Mohali, 531-acre integrated township in Hyderabad and a 14 acre residential project in Chennai.

***HDIL gets nod for Mumbai slum project-*** Real estate developer Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited (HDIL) has received government approval for the coveted Mumbai airport slum rehabilitation programme. HDIL had earlier bagged the project from the Mumbai International Airport. The tenement limit has increased to 250 sq ft from 225 sq ft leading to the increase in the transfer of development rights.

***Rajan Raheja Group likely to get nod for non-life foray-*** The insurance regulatory Development Authority (IRDA) is set to issue a license to Rajan Raheja Group for setting up a general insurance joint venture with Australia's QBE insurance group. The IRDA has given a first level clearance for the company's new general insurance joint venture.

***Sobha Group plans to set up hotels abroad-*** Realty company Sobha Group said it will build and operate a chain of hotel properties across the Indian subcontinent, West Asia and East Africa.

***Uppal Group investment in SEZ-*** The Delhi based real estate developer Uppal Group plans to invest another Rs 500 crore in developing 4-6 new SEZs in North India over the next three years.

***Highway Harbour*** - Bengal Shristi is building India's first highway Hub 'Ranigunj Square' on NH2 that connects Kolkata with Bardhaman, Durgapur & Asansol.

***JD Birla, PS Group back soft skills course*** - PS Group has stepped beyond its core business of real estate development to get involved in a 13 week programme in association with the JD Birla institute to train students in soft skills as part of its CSR initiative.

***Landmark to invest Rs 4,200 cr in 12 units*** - Landmark Group will invest over Rs 4,200 crore in developing 12 properties across the northern region in the next three-four years. The group is developing a 3,000 room-five star hotel in Dharuhera and a budget hotel in Gurgaon with about 120 rooms.

***Aman Resorts to set up hotels in Orissa*** - Aman Resorts, a luxury hotel-chain plans to invest in Orissa. A team of Singapore-headquartered hotel chain has visited three possible locations between Pipli and Konark for setting up a resort in the state.

***RDB plans three commercial complexes in the city*** - RDB Industries plans to develop at least four large-scale commercial complexes, including malls over the next couple of years. While three of these will come up within the city, the fourth one is expected to come up in Surat.

***Sobha's annual profit surges 41%, revenue up by 21%*** - Sobha Developers Ltd recorded a 13% growth in net profit during the fourth quarter of the 2007-08 financial year. Its net profit for the fourth quarter stood at Rs 79.2 crore.

## INDUSTRY NEWS

***One stop shops claim bigger durable pie in metros-*** With retail chains mushrooming all over the country, durable majors are increasingly betting on them to push sales. With chains like Reliance Digital, Croma, Next and E-Zone drawing up big expansion plans for the domestic markets standalone dealers are now a worried lot. Till recently, the Indian consumer electronics market, currently estimated around Rs 25,000 crore per annum, was totally in the hands of standalone dealers. With the entry of organized retail chain, this is set to change; already these chains have recorded sales of about Rs 2000 crore- eight per cent of the market.

***Developers feel the squeeze of liquidity crunch-*** Real estate developers are feeling the liquidity crunch- the sources of funds are drying up even as they get squeezed from both sides: high interest rates and property prices have hurt off-take while rising steel, cement prices have pushed input costs 20-25 per cent, which developers have to absorb for now. Land prices have been the key instigator and catalyst for real estate prices going through the roof. Real estate observers, analysts and agents say there is enough evidence to suggest that developers are feeling the crunch. The evidence- thanks to the demand slow down, actual transactions have dried up. In some cases where developers have higher sales, the cash flows are not there as the receivables are high.

***HDFC records 40% jumps in Q4 net-*** The net profit of the Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd (HDFC) for the quarter to March 31, 2008 increased by 40% to Rs 768.12 crore, as against Rs 550.05 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. The housing



finance major reported a net profit of which increased by 55% to Rs 2,436.25 crore in 2007-08 as compared with Rs 1570.38 crore in the previous year.

***Retail real estate to see up to \$10 bn investment in FY10-*** Developers and private equity players are set to put India's retail space market in full throttle with investments worth anywhere between \$5 billion and \$10 billion in FY09-Fy10. With \$5 billion investments coming into retail real estate development, developers are focusing on retail projects just the way they have been developing residential projects. In order to be successful the retail developers will have to have a right tenant-mix apart from the quality of mall management and customer friendly design. Interestingly, the retail real estate frenzy comes in the backdrop of tough days for the Indian real estate market. With higher interest rates and economic slowdown affecting consumer spending, realty deals in major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad have come down sharply in the period October-2007-March 2008.

***Aditya Birla Nuvo bets big on apparel retail-*** Aditya Birla Nuvo plans to extend its footprint in apparel retailing through two subsidiaries for men exclusive lifestyle and Peter England family stores. Madura Garments, the company's branded apparel division crossed a turnover of Rs 1000 in FY 08.

***The green house effect-*** Green buildings are not a new phenomenon with the Indian Green Buildings Congress calculating that there are about 70 million of sq ft of green space built-being built in India. But hitherto, green projects are mainly being commercial spaces. There are two reasons for this- one being the higher cost of energy efficient materials and eco-friendly and practices which in the price conscious residential sector can't be passed on to the customers. The other reason is that green buildings are not just about design and building, the green features have to be maintained.

***Old Mutual Funds plans 4 new realty funds of \$1 bn each-*** After life insurance and property services, the \$4.5 billion Old Mutual is planning to significantly increase its investments in the Indian real estate sector and plans to come up with four new funds that will invest \$1 billion each or more by 2015.

***Koutons retail to enter Middle-east by year end-*** Koutons retail will foray into the middle-east by the end of this year by opening exclusive outlets.

***New retail payment system to roll out in two months-*** National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI), which has been conceived to develop a robust payment system in the country, will be in place within two months. This was indicated by RBI executive director, Mr. RB Burman. The new entity will help establish a safe and secure efficient payment system in India, matching international standards and best practices.

***Mass Appeal-*** Developers across the board are clamoring for an incentive that is aimed at reducing the cost of homes to the masses. The concept was first aided by CREDAI at its national convention earlier this year when Chairman Kumar Gera asked the government to consider Special Residential Zones which would be dedicated specially to affordable residential housing development.

***Waiting for a private push-*** Siliguri is rapidly emerging as a regional trading hub. And a prime indicator has been a spurt in construction activity especially in the housing space. Small wonder, then leading lights such as Ambuja Realty Group, Bengal Unitech, and Sahara are silently making a beeline to cash in on the huge untapped potential of the Siliguri housing market. So much so, that Siliguri's action packed housing turf is tipped to attract over Rs 30,000 crore investments in the future.

***Deutsche Bank arm to invest in realty-*** RREEF Alternative Investments, the world's largest alternative investment business owned by Deutsche Bank plans to invest more than \$1 billion over three years in India's real estate and infrastructure assets. RREEF is confident that India will become an important investment destination for the firm's broad base of institutional, insurance and retail clients.

***Wardhawan group pans big investments in F&B, lifestyle-*** Real estate and retail player, Wardhawan Group is now betting big on food and beverages and lifestyle segments and planning to invest around Rs 3,500 crore in launching new restaurants format and luxury retail expansion plans. The group has recently entered into a tie-up with Dubai based Jumeriah Group in order to bring in South East Asian cuisine restaurants for the first time in India, branded as 'Noodle House'.

***Retailers, realtors to invest in infotek to woo customers-*** Retail, real estate majors and state governments are betting big on self-serve technology in India and are infusing huge

funds to the tune of Rs 1000 crore to Rs 1,500 crore in FY'09 for facilitating this. This is to enable employees as well as lay customers to pay mobile bills, book airline, and railway and movie tickets apart from being informed events and to be able to click photographs.

*The blurring line-* After turning over 50, the city is set to don a new look with a large number of huge, sprawling houses with minimalist designs being pulled down to give leverage to the electric styles of pseudo-French chateaus, Roman Villas, pediments, European Styles and Spanish eloquence. With architecture of Chandigarh going a sea change, there is an ongoing war between the followers of Corbusier. A major contributing factor for the change in the architectural scenario of the region is the development taking place in the IT sector.

***Weiner Berger bricks come to India-*** Weiner Berger has entered India with an initial investment of Rs 90 crore. The company will set up a manufacturing plant in Karnataka.

***Best Group launches city walk-*** Best Group has launched a mall in Bhatinda. Called the City Walk Mall, the project is a joint venture project between Pearls Group and Best Group.

***TRIL, TIDCO tie-up-*** Tata Realty and Infrastructure and Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation will jointly develop an IT SEZ spread over 25.27 acres at Taramani, Chennai's IT hub.

***Rattha Group to invest in IT SEZ-*** Rattha Group will set up a major IT SEZ in Porur, Chennai called Estra IT SEZ. The group has already developed IT parks along in Chennai.

***Zell sells commercial real estate resurging-*** Billionaire Sam Zell said institutional investors are beginning to return to the market for mortgage-backed securities that finance commercial real estate deals and new construction.

***Loan v/s rent: making the choice-*** Staying on rent or buying a house- each has its own advantages and disadvantages. While taking a loan, a lot of it depends on the property selected and the credit history of the customer. The loan amount can vary from anywhere between 50-85% of the value of property. In case of rents, it increases every 36 months to 5% of the capital value, somewhere in-between the 9th and 10th year the rent becomes

more than the EMI , thus negating any profit that could arise out of it. The final deciding factor after one goes through the figures should be the capital appreciation rate, of that area, which should be calculated keeping in mind a span of 12 years.

**Home loans: Housing finance cos see growth, banks slowdown-** While housing finance companies have registered strong growth in home loans disbursements, banks are seeing a slowdown in this segment. Growth in housing loan industry has slowed down from 25% in 2006-07 to 12 per cent in 2007-08, according to RBI's report "Macroeconomic and Monetary Developments 2007-08". Analysts attribute this fall to the banks going slow on retail loans due to rising non-performing assets and problems in recovery. However housing finance majors have registered strong growth in business.

**Green Homes rating system launched-** The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) launched the IGBC-Green Homes rating system at CII-Sohrabji Godrej Green Business Centre. The IGBC-Green Home rating system is the first ecological rating programme developed in the country exclusively for the residential sector, and addresses national priorities such as conservation of natural resources, infrastructure, water and energy efficiency, handling of domestic waste, health and well being of the occupants.

**No for now to a new house-** With housing loan interest rates shooting up, the middle class and upper-class class have begun to defer plans to buy a house. Reflecting the sentiment of the retail investors, the flow of capital into the real-estate and housing sectors has begun to slowdown, in line with the tempered growth in the Indian economy over the last year.

**Small houses, big demand-** Market demands and policy decisions are driving real estate developers in the south to look at lower priced houses. In the face of a slowdown in sales, the best way to improve demand, they believe, is to offer apartments in the Rs 20-30 lakh price range. While there is a huge demand in this segment, supplies are low from established players in the South. Developers are now recognizing the need for the smaller-sized apartments- like in Mumbai and NCR, where one can find 1-BHK apartments of around 700 sq ft.

**Interest rates-** On the policy sides, the RBI's decision enabling banks to provide for lesser risk weightage for loans up to Rs 30 lakh and signals from the government indicate that

the banks are not raising home loan rates for borrowers up to this limit. Interest rates for loans up to Rs 30 lakh are expected at least hold steady, if not soften. This too would increase the demand for products in the price range of up to Rs 35 lakh. This is seen as a positive move to keep the costs in control for the buyer.

***New venue for investors-*** Real estate mutual funds (REMFs) hold promise as a viable option for retail investors to participate in real estate as an asset class. While this could be a challenge to the mutual fund industry to manage a different asset class, the scheme would prove to be a boon for the real estate industry that often struggles to churn capital due to difficulty in offloading assets developed.

***Budget hotel chains eye India market-*** Leading international budget hotel chains is chalking up plans to debut in India. Canada-based the Royal Indian Raj International Corporation has entered into a contract with Choice Hotels to build 15,000 budget hotel rooms under the international brands of comfort, quality, sleep-inn and Clarion in the next 5-7 years with an investment of over \$4billion.

***Mass housing is trendy as property slows-*** Indian property investors are targeting lower-to mid end house owners in the booming economy now that sales of plush apartments have slowed. With the number of families earning more than Rs 2 lakh a year set to double to around 20 million in the next two years, demand for small and simple apartments is mushrooming. The Economic Times

***Building careers-*** The demand for talented and qualified individuals to power the burgeoning real estate industry has increased. The Indian real estate is maturing from the short-sprint mindset and is gearing for the long-distance stakes of sustainable real estate development. The real estate sector is diversifying beyond the basic bricks and mortar. Demand for real estate in growing segments like retail, hospitality, healthcare, biotech etc. people with specializations in environmental aspects are sought after as developers and consumers become increasingly aware of 'green issues'.

***Living on the edge-*** With property prices sky-rocketing in the city, developers are looking at new locations on the outskirts in the city. Presently, Batanagar and Maheshtala are two such hottest spots in the real estate map, thanks to the greenery and upcoming flyover from Jinjira Bazar to Maheshtala.

***RIL inks JV with Nova for green buildings-*** Mukesh Ambani led-Reliance Industries has joined hands with Canadian plastics major Nova for jointly designing and constructing energy efficient buildings in India, starting with those to be used to be used for India Inc's retail venture. The joint venture is expected to be operational by the third quarter of 2008 after finalizing the final agreements.

***Boom in stock market, real estate raises India's luxury car buyer-*** the booming stock market and real estate sector in India have helped several people make their fortunes out of it. This has resulted in more people splurging on top-end brands like BMW. Luxury car segment in the country grew 102.69% in 2007-08 at 4741 units as compared to 2339 units in 2006-07.

***Realty mutual funds only a long term play-*** With the Sebi issuing guidelines on the real estate mutual funds, investors will have another instrument to park their funds. However, financial experts are of the view that though REMFs are good for those who want to participate in the property boom, investors should not look at them as equity funds. REMFs will be closed-ended in nature. But by listing on the exchanges, the funds would give the investors an option to exit. The funds will invest in real estate and related assets as per Sebi norms.

***Supreme Court breather for suburban flat owners-*** Granting temporary relief to over 100,000 flat owners in suburban owners, the Supreme Court has ordered status quo on the appeals of developers who built apartments in about 1,000 acres in private forest lands. The Bombay Municipal Court has ordered a stop-work notice to the developers and they have moved the high court. It dismissed their petitions on March 25, following which they appealed to the Supreme Court.

***Property Exp for Gulf NRIs-*** Kerala Builders Forum is organizing the 'Kerala Property Expo' from May 8 to 17 at three different locations in West Asia. The expo will be conducted in Doha on May 8-10 at Regency Hall, in Kuwait on May 11-12 at Ramada Hotel and in Dubai from May 15 to 17 in Dubai Airport Expo.

***Realty counters turn to active zone-*** Trading volume remained at the F&O segment on the NSE on Monday at Rs 32973 crore against Friday's turnover of Rs 36304 crore. Realty

counters-Unitech, DLF, Hindustan Development and Infrastructure and JP Associates- also entered the active zone. While Unitech May futures saw a sharp surge value, others ended on negative note.

***Leela acquires land near Taj Mahal-*** Hospitality major Leela Hotels has acquired seven acres of land near the Taj Mahal for building a five-star deluxe hotel with 300 rooms. The site within a kilometer of the Taj Mahal, one of the seven wonders of the world.

***Hidden mortgage risks abound in US home market-*** While it's a given that home prices will continue to fall in most major markets in the immediate future, the conventional wisdom that will happen next is to be defied. Mortgages should be seen as risk management vehicles, instead of just financing. Adjustable loans, which accounted for two-thirds of fore closures of the fourth quarter of last year, exposed millions of home owners to a catastrophic amount of bond market risk.

***Destination New York for Pune realtor-*** Pune-based DS Kulkarni has braved the sub=prime crises to commence work on the housing project in New Jersey, which is close to New York. It plans to sell 11, 6, 000-square foot duplex homes for \$1.2-1.3 million each.

***Luxury condos, Singapore style-*** A realty major from Singapore is setting up luxury condos in New Town, complete with We-Fi connectivity, an aroma garden, an elevated green podium to camouflage the underground parking lot and a mini cricket field. Elita Garden Vista, a 1278-unit complex, is being developed on a 25 acre land parcel in Action Area III of the Rajarhat Township by Keppel Group Limited, the property arm of Keppel Group, one of Singapore's multinational behemoths with core businesses in offshore and marine infrastructure and property.

***Unity Infra gets Rs 223 cr orders-*** The Mumbai-based Unity Infraprojects Ltd has bagged two orders worth Rs 223 crore. The company will construct a regulated environment building at the prison complex, Mandoli, Delhi, for Rs 154.29. In Pune, it has received a Rs 68.25 crore order from Citi Corporation Ltd for civil works.

***Infra development onus to remain with govt agencies-*** The government will continue to shoulder the bulk of the investment required for the infrastructure sector even though it hopes that the private sector would pitch in significantly.

***Real estate stocks register steep dip-*** Real estate, which have been falling out of favour with investors for some time now, registered a steep dip on Tuesday. The BSE realty was the biggest loser among the sectoral indices, sliding 4.63 per cent against the BSE Sensex's fall of 0.67 per cent.

***IT, retail sectors emerging as two largest employers-*** Information technology with about 5 million jobs and retail sector with about 2.5 million in the next five years have the potential to be two major job creators in the country.

***Regulatory concerns, high realty prices continue to dog retail sector-*** The Indian retail industry estimated at about \$400 billion, continues to face some regulatory challenges in the area of licenses, clearances and taxation and spurt in realty prices. The real estate prices have shot up in the last three- four years requirements significantly higher investments as the retailers expand the footprint in the country.

***High-value home loans get a boost-*** More borrowers will opt for home loans in the range of Rs 20-30 lakh following the relief provided by the RBI. Because of the lower provisioning requirements, the benefit would be extended to new customers and existing customers on floating rate. The RBI had reduced the risk weight on housing loans for up to Rs 20 lakh to 50 per cent from 75 per cent 75 per cent in May 2007.

***Future Group to invest Rs 4000 crore in three years-*** Home grown retail giant Future Group will invest Rs 4000 crore in the next three years to increase its retail footprint in the country and penetrate further in the hinterland.

***Decision on FDI in retail unlikely in UPA regime-*** The government is unlikely to take any major policy initiatives with regard to foreign direct investment in retail in the near future. This is because, apart from the broad political opposition, the government has come under severe pressure from scores of trade and industry bodies from across the country against FDI in retail.



**Zensar looks to retail biz to drive revenues-** In the coming year, the Rs 783-crore IT and BPO company, Zensar Technologies, expects about 20% of its revenue to come from the retail domain. The company is looking to partner within international retail solution providers to provide local support for them in India.

**Arvind, Hartmax pact to bring more retail brands into India-** Arvind Brands, a division of Arvind Mills Ltd, has assigned alliance agreement with the US based Hartmax Corporation.

**Retail rev-up-** Cities like Bangalore and Hyderabad have seen exponential growth in the number of retail stores in the past few years. Not only have the number of major retail stores gone up by more than 10 times, several brands both national and international have owned flagship stores in the two cities. Thanks to the diverse population, high disposable income and well-traveled customers, the cities are also becoming test markets for several brands and retailers.

**Small bucks, big blocks-** The realty sector is all set to grow from \$55 billion to \$210 billion by 2014-15. Having clocked a 30% growth in the past few years it is projected that the industry would grow at 20% over the next five years. Amid an upscale housing boom, South India also faces a huge shortage of affordable housing.

**It's mall world-** Mall is big is the latest adage in South India's tier-II cities. Malls and multiplexes seem to be the young India's new found obsession in smaller cities like Mysore, Kochi, Kozhikode etc. India is witnessing an unprecedented realty boom. The beauty of this boom is that it is trickling down, the growth is spread and inclusive to a large extent.

**Banks, HFCs not planning home loan rate cuts for now-** Housing finance players including ICICI Bank, HDFC and State Bank of India, do not foresee an easing of lending rates of home loans immediately on account of rising inflation and borrowing costs.

**Poster home-** real estate in Kolkata is coming of age. Moving over from promoter driven projects of yesteryears, the current crop of real estate developers is increasingly investing in brand-building and positioning. While developing quality flats may still be the winning formula, advertisements and promotion have become equally important to draw eyeballs.

**Promoters may get nod to cut stake in phases-** The government is planning major modifications in its proposed amendments to the continued listing norms for companies in a bid to give promoters an option to offload stake in a phased manner.

**Global architects to revamp local skyline-** It is not just the consultants, funds and law firms that are entering India. The booming Indian real estate sector has attracted yet another important segment of the global industry-the architects.

**Starter's studio-** Studio-apartments are self-contained and small apartments, which combine living room, bedroom and kitchenette into a single unit. At a time infotech companies are looking at building residential campuses and the walk-to-work concept catching in on the service sector, studio-apartments at affordable prices are catching on.

**If King Khan can, so can your kitchen-** Kitchen makeover is surely one of the most expensive home-improvement missions; yet it is possible to breathe life into a worn-out kitchen on a limited budget, too.

**Housing price index soon-** A nation-wide housing price index may be a reality soon. The National Housing Bank, in collaboration with the National Council of Applied Economic Research, is close to finalizing the methodology to be adopted for the index, named NHB Residex.

**Danke group to enter realty equipment-** Vadodara based Danke group has decided to enter the construction equipment business and will rope in foreign partner. To consolidate its business, the group is merging its subsidiaries.

**Walk in beauty-** The Kolkata Municipal Corporation has have handed over five South Kolkata pavements to real estate agencies like Credai. The agencies will now be responsible for the beautification and maintenance of these pavements. The project is in line with Chief Minister Buddha Bhattacharjee's mission beautification project which started a year ago.

**A flat statement on your lifestyle-** XANADU, the sort of dreamy palace of pleasure people have marveled at will soon reach Kolkata as a city-based realtor draws inspiration

from it. Like the palace of Coleridge's Kubla Khan between heaven and earth, or the high-tech estate of magician Mandrake, the city's palace of magic will be synonymous with opulence.

***Tate Modern to city museum of art*** - The celebrated Herzog & de Meuron will create a museum of modern art in Calcutta, the first project to be taken up by a world-class architect in India since Le Corbusier agreed to build Chandigarh half a century ago. An agreement was signed between the trustees of Kolkata Museum, of Modern Art (KMOMA) & Harry Guggler, partner of Herzog & de Meuron, who will head the Calcutta project estimated to cost \$50 million. Delhi based Architect S.K. Das will execute the project.

***Home loan*** - ICICI Bank has decided to increase the repayment tenor for its home loan customers while cutting down their monthly installment amount.

***Dewan Housing Q4 net up 12%*** - Dewan housing Finance Corporation reported 11.78 %rise in net profit to Rs 29.44 crore compared with 13.51 crore during the corresponding period last year.

***More pain in US housing: HSBC*** - HSBC predicted the US housing market downturn could last for at least another year as the banking group revealed it had set aside \$5.8 billion as a result of the credit turmoil in the first quarter.

***Developers, banks lose out on young home buyers*** - Property developers and banks are losing out customers in the age group of around 25 years for home loans owing to these borrowers' inability to pay the requisite 10% down payment.

***Summer sizzles as retailers shower discounts*** - Attractive freebies and discounts being offered by retail biggies in the summer months of May & June when school students are on a holiday mood, are likely to increase their sales by 40%.

***Arvind Ltd to expand retail reach*** - Textile major Arvind Mills has been renamed Arvind Ltd as an art of a re-branding exercise and will sport a new logo. The company plans to open five more Megamarts this year and aims to reach Rs 1,000 crore revenues in the next three years. The company's three-pronged strategy includes entering tier-II & II towns,

launching large format stores & aggressively building portfolio of international private brands.

***Paramount Group to invest Rs 1,000 in three projects*** - The Delhi based real estate developer, Paramount Group is understood to have decided to invest about Rs 1,100 crore in three projects over the next two years.

***B'lore hotels plan to woo single lady guests*** - Bangalore star hotels are going all out to woo single lady guests. In addition they are also providing tight security measures like CCTV, additional security guards, room double locking, escort services and screening of calls.

***Illegal buildings to be okayed*** - KMC is trying hard to legalise unauthorized buildings in the metro-added areas in Jadavpur, Garden Reach & Behala. In this phase almost 300-odd buildings now are legalized only in Jadavpur. However, the MMlC maintained that regularization process would not compromise on the floor to Area Ratio rule.

***Taking cover off heritage houses*** - The KMC has decided to lift the cover off city's heritage sites & reinvent the glorious past of the metropolis.

***Desi retailers eye Gulf as shop floor training hub*** - The Gulf region is regarded as shoppers' paradise. For Indian retailers it is also the training hub for shop floor services. So when the Indian retail sector is hit with the current crisis of acute trained manpower shortage, they all turned to the Gulf.

***Percept ties up with Future Group to form Bollywood Retail*** - Entertainment, media and communications company Percept is forging a 50:50 joint venture with the Future Group to launch Bollywood retail. It aims to provide complete 'Bollywood experience' including Bollywood cafes, walk through, Hall of Fame Bollywood theme park, merchandising and a host of other experiential offerings for the visitors.

***France to liberate retail industry*** - France will press ahead with controversial plans to liberalize its retail sector, a cornerstone of the Sarkozy government's reform agenda, according to the country finance minister.

***Kenilworth's Hyderabad sojourn*** - Kolkata based Kenilworth Group is planning to set up two new hotels at Hyderabad as well as a group owned five acre plot in Coimbatore.

***SBI cards forays into retail finance products*** - As a part of the restructuring initiative, after appointing Diwakar Gupta, one of the top executives of State Bank of India, as the chief executive officer of SBI cards & Payment Services, the company has decided to diversify into other retail financial products.

***Commercial property prices seen tumbling*** - With major IT - ITeS and financial services companies keeping their real estate expansion plans in India on hold owing to the US slowdown & high rentals, the commercial real estate sector could see a price correction of around 15% in the third quarter of this fiscal, across the country.

***Wadias sue Raheja sober Mumbai land*** - Nusli Wadia has dragged the GL Raheja family to court for alleged breach of an agreement pertaining to 478 acres of Land in Malad. Prior to the move, M. Wadia had filed a suit against CL Raheja, the builders of Mumbai's InOrbit Mall and Mindspace in February this year.

***Rainwater harvesting*** - The KMC wants rainwater harvesting to be incorporated in the new building rule of certain types of buildings. In a press conference organised by the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, Mayor, Shri Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya said that buildings that are 13 meters and above should have rainwater harvesting system.

***Builders need to compensate delay in delivery of flats*** - The National Consumer Commission has held that a builder could not deny compensation to a buyer on its failure to deliver a flat within the stipulated time.

***Knight Frank sees home prices falling*** - Knight Frank India, a real estate consultant company, expects further correction in home prices if the current slowdown in residential property sales continues.

***Royal Palms to shell out Rs 2,400 cr to build hotels*** - Real estate and hospitality major Royal Palms India will invest Rs. 2,400 crore in the next two years for setting up four and

five star hotels in major cities in the country. The company is planning to build four luxury hotels in Mumbai.

**ICICI to raise \$ 3 bn for PE, property funds** - ICICI Venture Fund Management will tap investors for a \$ 1.5 billion private equity fund starting next week and may raise an equal amount for a real estate fund.

**Phoenix Mills setting up luxury mall in Mumbai** - The Rs 200 crore mall 'Palladium' developed by Phoenix Mills is coming up at the mill campus in Mumbai.

**PE funds shy away from real estate sector** - An apparent slow down in the real estate sector is forcing PE funds to rein in their exposure to the sector, with nearly 30 % of the deals now stuck over valuations.

**Housing loan norms eased** - The RBI relaxed the risk provisioning norm for housing loans up to Rs 30 lakh, a move that would make it easier for banks to provide loans for purchase of residential properties.

**Just a click away** - The concept of eco-friendly, electronically savvy homes and offices are making waves in the Indian realty arena due to their distinctive features. The latest addition being the concept of eco friendly, electronically savvy homes popularly known as Smart homes or e-Homes.

**Credit rating for builders?** - Slowly but steadily, state and regulatory agencies are gearing to monitor neighbourhood builder, contractor or broker to make them more quality conscious and accountable.

**Retail takes the rent dent** - The drop in retail rental values in the last three months varies from 10%- 35% in some micro markets such as Greater Noida & Saket. The rental rates in cities such as Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, Pune & Bangalore have dropped by 10% - 15%.

**Realty to turn cash cow for airports** - Airport developers will earn more than half their revenue by 2015 from non-aeronautical sources - primarily property rentals - if the

building of new airports and modernization of existing ones proceeds at the pace envisaged by the government.

**IndiaBulls Real Estate move** - IndiaBulls Real Estate Ltd has allotted 1.67 crore equity shares of the face value Rs 2 each, credited as fully paid-up, as underlying and representing 1.67 crore Global Depository Receipts.

**Aditya Birla Group unveils Peter England People retail arm** - The Aditya Birla Group took another step forward to transform Madura Garments, its branded apparel business, from a wholesale shirt brand player to a retail-led company by launching its second retail company by launching its second retail arm, Peter England People, in Mumbai.

**Coimbatore realty looks to IT** - The real estate market of Coimbatore is facing slackening demand. The city shares some of the reasons with other cities - hardening of home loan rates and increase in the cost of land building materials that have pushed up the price of home/apartments. But there is lot more; the slowdown in the textile & engineering sectors has caused the local people cautious about investment in real estate. The expectations are that once the State Government promoted IT park and the private IT SEZs take off, providing large scale employment to the techies, the real estate industry will bounce back.

**Soon, an exclusive healthcare city on Hyderabad outskirts** - In a bid to exploit the growing euphoria for medical tourism, the Andhra Pradesh government is planning to develop an exclusive healthcare city on the outskirts of Hyderabad.

**Citigroup may sell German retail ops** - Citigroup is evaluating the sale of its German retail banking operations.

**Blackstone to focus on distressed property** - Blackstone, which made big profits last year by flipping commercial properties at the height of the market, is considering buying back into some of those assets at distressed process as part of an effort to cash in on the credit crisis.

***Mall mania in Siberia*** - Developers are turning to the 12 provincial cities in Russia with populations over one million, islands of prosperity with population inflows from rural migration and rising purchasing power, ripe for malls.

***Builders seethe at PWD ceiling*** - With the rise in the market price of building materials due to the increasing inflation rate, the contractors short-listed by the state government for various construction works would be incurring heavy financial losses.

***Asansol plays host to IT SEZ*** - Bengal's second IT SEZ, sprawling over 1 million sqft, is coming up in Asansol. The project is being developed by Bengal Shristi Infrastructure Development. The difference between the rates of space at Rajarhat and Asansol can be more than 100%.

***In the world of REMFs...*** - With the market regulator SEBI allowing real estate mutual funds, retail investors will henceforth be able to reap the benefits of a share in real estate development. The significant feature is that the retail investors will be able to participate in larger projects.

***Airport upgrades projected to add 78 mn sq ft realty space*** - Nearly 78 million square feet real estate is expected to be added by 2015 due to 47 airport modernization and upgrade projects. The projects cover 40,000 acres across existing 40 and 7 new airports.

***BSEL plans Malaysia arm to aid operations*** - BSEL has signed a MoU with Malaysia's Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) to develop properties in Johar Bahru region of Malaysia. The company plans to invest Rs 18,000 cr in the next 12 years.

***RPG to double retail turnover*** - The RPG group has lined up an aggressive expansion plan for its retail business and aims to virtually double its turnover to Rs 1,800 crore this year.

***Residential rentals in Delhi rise 13 per cent*** - Rentals of residential properties in central Delhi have appreciated up to 13% in the first quarter of 2008 as demand continues to be buoyant despite the capital witnessing saturation on development of new space.



***Future's Central retail chain plans variable prices, products*** - Future group owned Central retail brand of stores will have a differentiated product and pricing strategy for each market it enters.

***Realty fund to develop low-cost housing*** - Milestone Capital Advisors, a real estate venture fund, is planning to invest Rs 1,200 crore for developing low-income and middle-income 'green' residential projects and warehouses in Tamilnadu.

***Radisson package*** - Radisson Hotel Delhi is offering the industry's first corporate package, aimed at corporate guests using late night or early morning departures of international flights. The package will be available to other Radissons hotels in India.

***Future JV eyes mallassurance*** - Future generally India Life Insurance (non-life venture), are targeting 30% of their business to come from malls. Mallassurance is a new concept that has been introduced by retail giants that have recently launched insurance companies. The insurance companies are joint ventures between Italy-based Future Generali and Kishore Biyani's Future Group.

***Future retail expansion plan goes for a toss*** - Central, the Future Group's premium retail format, is changing its expansion strategy in metro cities such as Mumbai and Delhi after rents for shops in these cities doubled in the past couple of years.

***Peninsula forays into hospitality sector*** - Peninsula Land, the property development arm of Ashok Piramal Group, announced its foray into hospitality sector with a joint venture with textile maker and real estate developer Arrow Webtex. The JV will develop hotels across the country.

***Housing slowdown hurts Home depot*** - Home depot's first-quarter earnings tumbled by 66 % after The world's largest home improvement retailer was hit by costs from store closing and scrapping new stores, as well as a worsening housing market.

***Triveni infra plans IPO*** - Triveni Infrastructure development Company Ltd, a real estate developer with primary focus on the NCR region, intends to tap the capital market to raise about Rs 400 crore with an IPO of 80 lakh equity shares of Rs 10 each.

***Future Group offers self-publishing initiative*** - Depot, the group's book, music and stationary retail arm have come forward to help out the budding writers of the country guiding them to publish their first work.

***Markets, subprime dent realty deals*** - The number of transactions in housing business has fallen. Residential projects are feeling the heat of the US subprime crisis and poor market sentiments. The most hit is the north India property market with project sales witnessing a steady dip in transaction volumes.

***Real estate MFs to draw in more foreign money*** - The foreign investment funds opening shops here are asked by RBI to give an undertaking that the money they raise will not go into property market. In its battle against 'asset price bubbles' RBI will now face a challenge from an unlikely quarter. A month ago SEBI has paved the way for foreign funds to take a new route to enter the local property market. This would be through Real Estate Mutual Funds (REMFs).

***Insurance agents may soon pass income legacy to heirs***- Retail insurance may soon be like another owner-driven business, where the following the owner's death, his/her legal heir is entitled to make income from the business. An agent's legal heir may soon be entitled to renewal commission from policies the agent sold during his / her lifetime.

***Reliance Retail eyes global JVs*** - To capture the potential market for premium food, Reliance retail is in advanced talks for alliances with at least four foreign food companies - US based fruit & vegetables supplier - Dole & Chiquita and meat retailers Sadia of Brazil and Doux of France. The flurry of likely deals indicates that Reliance Retail is still quite focused about their food & vegetable business despite political controversies stalling its spread in certain states.

***FDI in front-end retail may stem inflation, says US*** - The US feels opening up of retail sector and allowing FDI in front-end retail may help reduce inflation in India. The logic is that since 30% of agricultural produce goes waste, opening up of the retail sector will trigger higher investments in supply chain and back-end infrastructure such as cold chains and enable better market access to farmers.

***VF mulls new retail structure*** - Lifestyle apparel giant VF Corp is exploring options for direct foray into India's retail market, including the possibility of FDI in single brand retailing with maximum permissible 51% stake allowed under current regulations.

***Retailers, buyers want more FDI*** - Even as the commerce and Industry minister said a big no to relaxing FDI in retail in April, consumers & domestic retailers feel infusion of FDI will ease out financial constraints and provide technological exposure.

***VF Corp not to buy out Arvind's stake in joint venture*** - VF Arvind Brands dismisses the media reports of buying out Arvind's stake. The company is toying with the idea of setting up jeans wear 'destination stores' which will sell both Lee & Wrangler. A large format store (about 4,000 sqft) will set up in Bangalore in 8-12 weeks.

***UBS sells US realty assets*** - Swiss Banking Giant UBS has completed the sale of American real estate related assets worth \$15 billion to global investment management firm BlackRock.

***Mumbai realty co signs pact with Malaysian firm for cybercity*** - Mumbai based Sunil Mantri Realty Ltd has signed a memorandum of understanding with MSC Cyberport, the first Malaysian Cybercity in Kulai, Johor.

***Sun group to invest in Punjab*** - The UK based Sun Group has firmed up plans to invest Rs 550 crore in real estate sector in Punjab.

***Healthy rise in HDIL net profit*** - Housing development & Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL) has posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 1,409.84 cr for the year ended in 31st March'08, compares with Rs 548 cr a year ago.

***Westside to invest Rs 2 cr in franchise outlets*** - Westside plans to invest Rs 2 cr for the rollout of its franchise stores across 37 tier II and III cities.

***Home solutions merger with Big Bazaar on radar*** - Future Group planning to merge the Home Solutions retail India Ltd., the group company with Hypermarket chain Big Bazaar.

***Spencer's to firm up retail operations with 2 formats*** - Spencer's Retail has kicked off a restructuring exercise. The company which used to operate with five retail formats, plans to consolidate operations with two formats. The outlets spread between 3,000 sqft and 15,000 sqft will be named 'Spencer's' while those upwards of 25,000 sqft will operate as 'Spencer's Hyper'.

***For NRIs, home is where the investments should be*** - NRIs are keener to park their funds in non-repatriable NRO accounts instead of investing in repatriable schemes like FCNR (B) & NRE (RA). Rising prospects of Realty & Stocks, plus better interest rates prompts overseas Indians to keep money in NRO accounts.

***AB Group plans to invest Rs 80,000 crore in Orissa*** - Aditya Birla Group is planning to invest Rs 75,000 - 80,000 cr in retail, cement, telecom, aluminium among other sectors in Orissa.

***Luxury malls to drive Louis Vuitton's expansion*** - Luxury malls will drive global luxury brands Louis Vuitton's expansion plans in the country.

***EsVee Group plans townships*** - The Ahmedabad Based EsVee Group plans to develop townships across India. The townships are named 'Highlands'

***Agra getting a massive makeover*** - Agra Development Authority (ADA) has charted out an expansion plan with a new 4,000 acre hi-tech township of international standards on the outskirts of the city. Agra is getting a makeover to embrace modernity replete with Marvelous shopping malls, resorts, townships and commercial centres.

***Global eye on health city*** - The Rs 800 cr health city project coming up on about 58 acres of land in the Bardhaman Municipal Area, at the junction of Durgapur Expressway and old GT Road, promises to put Bengal on the global healthcare map. Several international firms are lining up for a stake in the big business project.

***Salt Lake markets to get mall makeover*** - Bidhannagar Municipal has sanctioned the plan to renovate the Baisakhi Market into a swanky mall. This will be followed by the BD market. All the markets will be developed on the PPP model.

***Integrated townships to take off in a big a way*** - Integrated townships are the next big thing in Indian real estate sector. With a quiet growth in the number of planned projects that blend in a lot of things to make ambitious projects really successful and sustainable.

***Organised retail vital to avert supply crunch, say Icrier*** - Strongly favouring the entry of organised retail, the economic think-tank, Icrier said an absence of organised players would lead to supply crunch in the retail market. The premier research body mandated to study the impact of organised retail said direct sales to retailers raises farm income by more than 50%.

***LIC to build state's tallest building*** - LIC is poised to earn the record of building the tallest skyscraper in Kolkata, or for that matter, in West Bengal.

***The carpet riddle*** - The Maharashtra Government's recent amendment to the Maharashtra Ownership Plats Act [MOFA] making mandatory the sale of flats on carpet area basis is meant to usher in more transparency and impact the industry positively.

***Property boom in city defies dull trends*** - Kolkata rules in the real estate scenario of the country. Even as property prices are showing signs of stagnation across the country, the city's real estate market is booming and growing at an exceptional pace.

***King Khan of Asian retail Market*** - India's retail story can get better than this. In fact, for the first time, three Indian cities have joined the elite list of top 10 retail locations in Asia. Leading the pack, Delhi's Khan Market has emerged as the fourth most expensive retail high streets across the Asian Market, while Mumbai's Linking Road & Chandigarh's Sector 17 market occupies the eighth & ninth position.

***US house sales slip further, stock of unsold homes rises*** - In US, home resales fell 1% in April to a 4.8 million-unit annual rate. A recently disclosed data refers that the backlog of unsold properties hit a record high and the market's downturn still has a long way to run.

***Lohia to invest Rs 350cr in real estate*** - Diversified business house Lohia Group is planning to invest up to Rs 350 crore in developing three projects in the national Capital and Uttar Pradesh by 2011.

***Shop, drop& sleep*** - A Birla Group retail venture More is holding talks with French Hospitality giant 'Accor' for setting up neighbourhood hotels alongside stores for tapping better yields on its high-cost real estate base.

***Retail takes big leap, soon you can shop for a job too*** - Calling themselves a 'job junction' a Ahmedabad based company 'Interactive Manpower Solutions' is taking the success of the retail model a step ahead and that too in the job recruitment sector. Geared up to open 200 such 'job junctions' across Gujarat, the company is banking in an already hit formula that is being followed abroad and plans to provide three lakh jobs.

***Retail behavior*** - It seems that supermarkets located at the ground floor attract more footfalls compared to ones located on higher floors or even the basement. The basement supermarkets pip the first floor ones on consumer walk-ins.

***LIC to invest Rs 400 cr in 50 storey office building*** - LIC will invest Rs400 cr, including the land cost including the land cost, in constructing a 50 storey office building, the tallest building in Eastern India.

***REIT funds become this year's Cinderellas*** - Mutual funds specializing in real estate are clawing their way back after taking a clobbering in the credit crunch last year. The average real estate fund, which lost more than 14% on average in 2007, is up nearly 5.6% this year through May12, which makes it the second-best performing US stock fund group this year.

***Koutons Retail to focus more on stores expansion*** - Koutons Retail is on expansion mode, with plans to launch about 600 stores across India.

***Enticing buyers with freebies*** - Stung by the bearing realty market, realty developers are now unleashing discounts, freebies and innovative schemes to lure buyers into residential space.

***LIC to buy land worth Rs 2,000 cr*** - LIC is planning to acquire land worth Rs 2,000 crore this year to develop commercial and residential complexes. This will be in addition to the rest of Rs 1,100 core it spent last year for purchasing lands across the country.

***Removing bottlenecks could see Indian real estate soar*** - Property developers in India need to raise large sums of money to ease the shortage of everything from office towers, warehouses and shopping malls to apartments, multiplex cinemas and hotel rooms.

***Three green hospitals coming up*** - Three green hospitals are coming up in Kolkata soon with the first two opening its door by the year end a third one - a 500 bed multi specialty hospitals - from March. Mukundapur on EM Bypass will host the hospitals, which include an ENT Hospital & A JV eye clinic with Sankara Nethralaya. Medica Synergy is developing these three hospitals.

***Retail trade*** - A report on the 'impact of big retail on neighbourhood stores' by ICRIER, revealed that organised retail poses no threat to small grocers but rather helps farmers' gain from competitive pricing.

***Revenue gains can refurbish small stores*** - As the share of organised players in overall retail trade grows; the government is likely to gain in terms of tax revenues as 'it would be much easier to collect sales taxes from organised retailers than from traditional retailers'.

***Local traders refuse to buy ICRIER logic, big retailers hail findings*** - Organised retail chains have welcomed the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) report for supporting their stand that their operations have little impact on mom-and-pop stores. Trade group opposing big retail chains, however, say the report does not give true picture.

***UCO Bank to cut rates on home, education loans*** - UCO Bank is set to slash interest rates on products such as home and education loans. In case of the home loans, the new rates will be applicable for advances up to Rs 30 lakh, which is in line with RBI's decision to reduce the risk weight to 50% on home loans up to Rs 30 lakh.

***Allahabad Bank to set up six retail hubs*** - Kolkata based Allahabad Bank will set up six retail hubs to speed up the processing of retail loans and also put in place special business units (SBU) to boost its fee based income. It has identified small & medium enterprises as the other thrust area.

**High realty prices hit India** - Expansion plans of footwear & apparel major Adidas India have been hit by high real estate prices in the country. The company was planning to increase the number of retail stores from 325 at present to 450 by the end of 2008.

**No cheers for retail giants as IPL stops their business run** - The ongoing IPL Twenty20 cricket tournament has taken the nation by storm and the retailers complain that they are among its unintended casualties, just like the movie halls which have been drained of cine-goers.

**Durable cos eye new categories to tap retail, realty growth** - With an eye on the burgeoning real estate, retail and hospitality segment Korean, Chinese and even domestic firms are introducing products in several new categories this year. The Indian durable market has been consistently growing at the rate of 10-12% every year.

**'Organised retail enhances gains for consumers'** - The recently published report by ICRIER says that organised retail could enhance gains for consumers. It explains that the emergence of organised retail "undoubtedly gives consumers a wider choice of goods, more convenience, and a better shopping environment among other benefits".

**Big retailers plan big by thinking small**- By rolling out low-priced corner shops, big retailers are attempting to find their fortune at the bottom of the retail pyramid.

**KMDA loan** - KMDA will take a loan of Rs 200 cr from Hudco to set up houses for the poor under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, State Minister for urban Development, Shri Asok Bhattacharya said. Under the scheme 1.45 lakh houses are to be constructed for the urban poor.

**Akme, MPC to invest Rs 1K cr in 7 projects** - Anil Nanda Group Company Akme Projects has entered a 50:50 JV with private equity firm MPC Synergy Real Estate to develop seven housing projects with an equity investment of Rs 1,000 cr.



**KMC asked not to allow mobile towers in residential areas** - The environment Department has asked KMC not to allow any tele communications industry to setup mobile tower in congested residential areas from now onwards.

**SREI unit to develop rural IT infrastructure** - A wholly owned subsidiary of SREI Sahaj e-village, has undertaken a rural IT infrastructure project, with an estimated investment of Rs 1,000 crore over a span of two years.

**Discount retail format in India to hit RS 30,000cr** - Discount Stores which were mere dump yards for factory seconds a few years ago have emerged as a brand new business opportunity for Indian retailers.

**Road caves in off mega project** - An over 1,200 sqft chunk of Rajdanga Main Road, next to the site of RS 400 cr mall-stadium-highrise project, caved in, causing cracks in the walls of an adjacent five-storeyed building, which has also tilted forward. Mackintosh Burn, a state government undertaking, is executing the project for Merlin Group and the KMDA.

**Wadhawan Food Retail mulls integrating brands** - Wadhawan Food retail, which owns Spinach, Sabka Bazaar and Home Store formats, is likely to integrate all its brands and has planned an investment of over Rs 1,500 crore in its retail venture.

**Liberating the retail sector** - Indian retail is expected to grow at 9% pa, while modern retail will grow at a CAGR of 30% and account for more than 25% of the total retail by 2018.

**Realty scrips have a long road ahead to recovery** - For all the talk about a slowdown in the economy, real estate price in most parts of the country have not corrected as much as most prospective buyers would have liked them to. But, shares of most real estate companies are not finding any takers even after falling nearly 50% from their record highs in January this year.

**Piramyd changes name** - Piramyd Retail Ltd has informed the National Stock Exchange that the name of the company shall be changed to IndiaBulls Retail Services Ltd and the trading symbol would be changed from Piramydret to Ibretails with effect from June 9, 2008.

***IT, non-IT rental gap widens*** - The rental gap between IT and ITeS office space and others is widening as per the latest report by real estate consultant Jones Lang LaSalle, leading to a severe supply crunch for the non-IT segment.

***Big retailers woo smaller players to expand in tier II, tier III cities*** - More big retail players are likely to enter into revenue-sharing tie-ups with their smaller counterparts in a move to expand the former's retail presence in the Tier II, Tier III cities in the next few years.

***New spaces*** - While Mumbai recorded the highest increase in rental values in a single year at 94.44%, IMT Manesar near Delhi records fifth highest percentage growth in rental values in a single year with a growth of 30 %.

***NCR retail rentals up 16% may rise further*** - Retail space rentals in the national capital region shot up to 16% during first quarter of 2008 and are likely to be under pressure in coming days too, despite an expected supply of about four million sqft in the second quarter.

***State unwilling to land in mega projects mess*** - After the dismal show in the recent panchayat elections, the Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee government is in the back foot. The state industries minister Shri Nirupam Sen asserted that the state government would not encourage investors to embark on mega projects where farmland acquisition was involved.

***Inox unveils Rs 100 cr expansion plans*** - Inox Leisure is ramping up its presence in the eastern region, after putting up 24 multiplex screens across cities like Vadodara, Kolkata, Mumbai & Goa in the last six years. The company would be spreading out across three-four fresh locations every year for the next two-three years. By 2010, the company wishes to have some 68-70 multiplexes with some 260 screens. The company can develop the multiplexes in their own, if they find a good land at attractive price or they can go on lease.

***Safety first*** - There are several safety rules that should be scrupulously followed by the construction of high-rise buildings. Realty circles, however, feel such rules are followed more diligently by branded developers and in government buildings. Though the safety

code is carefully followed and the requisite equipment religiously installed, little care is taken to ensure their proper functioning and maintenance.

***Temple for Sale*** - Kolkata's real estate hunger has been circling the quaint red brick building in the heart of the city's once- Chinatown for years.

***Time & space in theatre*** - The perfect theatre space still eludes Calcutta and the new ones may be replete with glitches galore, but the Indian Institute of Interior Design celebrated Interior's Day with an interaction between architects and theatre veterans at Rotary Sadan on Thursday. The topic was, 'time, space, identity: a focus on the theatre-architecture'.

***When crores come home*** - The semi-finals & finals of IPL may dent big retail business by 15-30%, with fewer footfalls.

***Locals go global in search of dream home*** - More and more Indians are looking to buy property abroad. The rise in the number of Indian millionaires along with a fall in real estate prices in the UK and the US - economies that have been hit by the sub-prime crisis - have fuelled the demand for property abroad.

***EMI holidays drive flat housing sales*** - Faced with declining demand for properties, real estate companies are courting buyers with new offer: EMI holidays. This trend is catching up in New Delhi & Bangalore, where real estate markets face stagnation. Under an EMI holiday scheme, the buyer only needs to make a down payments of 10% - 15% of the flat's cost and does not need to pay EMI till he gets possession. However, the buyer has to arrange the loan and the builder will pay the interest till the flat is handed over, in about 18-24 months.

***Salt Lake residents to attend tax hearing*** - Wary after losing a property tax case at the Supreme Court, the Bidhannagar Municipality is treading carefully in Round Two

***US NRI demand for Indian realty on the rise...*** - While the subprime mortgage pain that had hit financial companies hard across US is finding the hangover lasting longer than anticipated, there is little or no impact at all among 2.5 million US NRI/ PIOs to invest in real estate back home.

***Now Faridabad emerges hot realty hub*** - After the years of suburban obscurity, the Faridabad market - the third satellite town in Delhi - NCR - is now calling the shots and property rates have jumped 20-25% in the last few months. The development assumes importance since the other two most happening areas in the NCR - Gurgaon & Noida - have seen a price correction in recent months.

***Boutique beauty*** - Targeted at high net worth individuals, the boutique apartments in Delhi's posh Vasant Vihar are Uppal housing's second attempt at plug'n'play projects.

***The numbers are in: Mumbai's real estate market has been hit by a slowdown*** - Mumbai's real estate market is finally taking a beating. Property sales that have been growing at a clip of about 20% every year have plummeted by 17% in 2007-08, the first time in six years.

***Special stopovers*** - Hospitality company 32nd Milestone is setting up boutique properties in Goa.

***Signature apartment*** - TravelOrg Holidays Pvt Ltd has unveiled Signature Crest apartments in Shimla and Mussorie. The apartments are part of a chain of fully-furnished service apartments across the country.

***Dubai based real estate major eyeing India*** - Dubai -based real estate major Majid Al Futtaim (MAF) is likely to enter India for which it is in the process of identifying a local partner.

***Godrej properties to go public, files prospectus with SEBI*** - Godrej Properties Ltd filed the Draft red herring prospectus with SEBI for an IPO to raise necessary fund for company's expansion.

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