

# UK seeks participation in Indian water supply biz

A delegation of representatives from the water supply business and water technologies industry in Britain were in Chennai on February 12, interacting with government officials and businessmen in those sectors in India, seeking partnerships between the two countries in water supply management.

Pushing for private sector participation in actual implementation of water supply systems and their billing were on the top of their agenda.

"The present policy framework allows for private sector participation only in consulting for local bodies and PSUs

involved in water supply in urban areas," said Singapore based MWH water supply management's U.K. regional manager Jivir Vijayakumar. "That is just 10 percent of the business." It is another thing that the issue of water supply is present at all only in Indian cities and not in its rural areas.

"It is best for governing bodies to regulate the water supply business, while the private sector actually offers the service," said UKTI London international business specialist (environment and water) Jeremy Goad. "That is the model that we have been following in Britain ever since our

water reforms started way back in 1963."

Peter Jarema, director of Farrer Consulting, stuck a moderate note by suggesting the popular PPP model for Indian urban water supply. "Cities here are faced with issues like intermittent water supply, lack of sustainability, and system leaks and losses. The public and private sectors should come together to solve them."

The public sector takes care of the financing gaps and the risk parts of the business while the private sector delivers process efficiency, he said.

However, the Chennai metro water supply and sewerage board (CMWSSB)

was clear that it was not going to explore privatisation options in the near future. "We have implemented many modern projects and process efficiency tools in our water supply system," said CMWSSB MD Shiv Das Meena. "We have achieved that by taking only consultation from the private sector."

For one, India already has the system of devolution of the power of water supply to urban local bodies, which came with water reforms in Britain. CMWSSB, particularly, had implemented GIS mapping and tracking of its supply infrastructure four years ago, and is awaiting funds to take it further.

## Sachin to join legends at Madame Tussauds



Indian cricket maestro Sachin Tendulkar will be the latest sporting great to be featured at the internationally-renowned Madame

Tussauds in London when a new wax figure of the Mumbai-born batsman joins the A-list line up in April.

Tendulkar follows in the famous footsteps of Bollywood greats Amitabh Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai, Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan and will join other cricket legends Brian Lara and Shane Warne to become the very first Indian sports personality to be portrayed, the waxworks museum said in a statement on February 27.

Sachin has already had a sitting with the Madame Tussauds studios team who travelled to Mumbai to capture a catalogue of reference photographs and hundreds of precise measurements. The information they collected at the two-hour session at the Taj Lands End Hotel will prove invaluable as the sculptors and hair and make-up artistes get to work on his figure.

"We are delighted to confirm our next Indian superstar is going to be Sachin Tendulkar; his achievements on the cricket pitch are phenomenal and he is one of the biggest names in international sport," says Liz Edwards, Madame Tussauds PR manager.

## British Asian magazine strikes a recession-beating deal

Britain's largest free journal for the South Asian community has reached a distribution deal that will see it stocked on the shelves of the country's biggest supermarkets, its managing director said.

Anasudhin Azeez said copies of *Asian Lite* will be stocked at select Morrisons, Asda, Tesco and Sainsbury's stores from Friday under a deal reached with Self Select Distribution.

It could see the circulation of *Asian Lite*, which is aimed at the highly-skilled South Asian market, rocket to 40,000 copies despite the current recession in Britain. Focusing on London and its surrounding areas at first, the distribu-



The website of Asian Lite.

tion deal is planned to roll out into the Midlands region in April, with Azeez aiming to top the 50,000 circulation mark by the title's second anniversary in June. "As the recession gets deeper, more major clients will turn to community focused publications like *Asian Lite*. The new distribution network will

help us to provide better services to mainstream clients," Azeez said.

The paper recently roped in mainstream clients British Airways, Lloyds TSB and Pontin's Holidays, and its website has begun to attract clients of the stature of the BBC.

"*Asian Lite* is emulating the success of Metro to become the country's largest newspaper targeting the British-Asian community — one of the most affluent sections in the British society," Azeez said. "There is a gap in the market for a quality Asian journal and we are providing a successful combination of news, views and entertainment to a family audience."

## British temple gets 14 idols from Jaipur

Fourteen marble idols imported from India have been installed in a prominent British temple, in a ceremony attended by hundreds of people from across Britain.

People attended the 'consecration ceremony' of 14 marble idols imported from Jaipur and installed in the Geeta Bhawan temple in the east Midlands town of Derby.

The statues cost £40,000 and were paid by the donations from worshipers, who also contributed to the building of the new temple, which opened last summer.

Colourful procession were held through the streets of Derby to celebrate the occasion. The statues were installed after the procession and Madhu Shastri, from the National Council of Hindu Temples, addressed the gathering.

"We've never had anything like this in Derby before — it's been a fantastic day," Prem Shukla, who helped organise the procession, said. The procession was the culmination of the four-day process of preparing the 14 icons, which represent as many different gods and goddesses. Five priests washed them in

holy water from the Ganga and stood them on wheat grain and rice to "purify" them before they were dressed with traditional flowers and clothes.

At the forefront of the procession was 84-year-old Lalita Kanji Raithatha. Praising the fund raising by Derby's Hindu community, senior temple trustee Kanty Patel said, "We've had a good response from people from day one."

The Hindu community in Oxford has also started the process to build a temple in the ancient university town.

## Now a 'Kolkata Haat' to popularise rural crafts

Tourists and locals can now buy handicrafts directly from artists bringing their wares from places like Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Rajasthan with the launch of 'Kolkata Haat', similar to the arts and crafts bazaar in New Delhi.

"Nowadays, people are getting more and more inclined towards the mall culture. As a result, our village crafts are suffering. Something had to be done to save these rural artisans as well as use a different way of drawing people to them," Faiyaz Ahmed Khan, member, Mayor-in-Council (parks and gardens), said at the inauguration on February 27. The weekly bazaar, located near New Market in central Kolkata, is a joint initiative of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) along with National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)



and city-based Simplex Projects Ltd.

"Let aside France and Italy, even our capital has its own 'Dilli Haat' that attracts people and tourists across the world. On one hand, it increases the business of the suffering artisans; at the same time, gives a break to people from monotonous mall-hopping," Khan said.

Over 200 artisans and performers from across the

country, including Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh are participating in the 'Kolkata Haat'. The major attractions of the 'Haat' are cane and bamboo works of Jalpaiguri and Assam, bell-metal articles of Chhattisgarh, clayworks of Bankura, and the Patachitra paintings from Orissa.

People can also enjoy folk performances from various parts of the country like Chhau dance from Purulia, Kalbeliya of Rajasthan and Bihu of Assam.

"We have given Rs. 600,000 to two NGOs to bring the artisans and folk artists from remote parts of the country. If this initiative is successful, then we want to make it a permanent one in the city," Raghav Mundhra, director of Simplex Projects Ltd, said after the inauguration.