

# Flaunting a new look

THE DILAPIDATED BLOCK MARKETS WILL SOON WEAR  
A BRAND-NEW LOOK AS WORK STARTS THIS SUNDAY

Archisman Dinda

On April 27, 2008, Salt Lake will witness the beginning of a public-private partnership that promises to change the way your market next-door looks. The Bidhannagar Municipality, in a first-time attempt to convert a block market into a swanky mall has signed an agreement with a consortium of builders and AG market will be the first in the line of at least a couple of others to get this makeover.

"The AG market was a make-shift market and we have decided to give space to the 210 odd vendors of the market, though not without them paying for the space," said Nandogopal Bhattacharyya, member-in-council.

Being built at a cost of Rs 35 crore, the market is expected to be 1,82,500 square feet in area. "The building will be segregated into 5 zones, with separate area for retail,

office space, municipal facilities, food court and car parking," said Mohan Meharia, chairman of the consortium. "The municipality will have 25,000 square feet of space at its disposal, within the complex," informed Bhattacharyya, who is also the councillor of the block. The rehabilitation process was the biggest hurdle that any governmental agency faces during such projects, and this time it was no different. "It has been a difficult to convince them that they will be properly rehabilitated after the constructions is over and that process actually took a lot of time," said an official of the municipality. The vendors have now been shifted to a separate spot and they will be operating from there till the new market is constructed. "The building will be completed within 2 years," confirmed Meharia.

Apart from converting a neighborhood market into a swanky mall, the builders

hope to make it environmental friendly, by installing solar powered gadgets, and rain-water harvesting system. "Active and passive solar energy control systems will be designed to achieve the desired microclimate in a more cost effective way," said an official from the builders office. The building has been designed in such a way, that not only will it serve as a focal point, but will also maximize the use of natural lighting and ventilation. The complex will have the most efficient water supply system, and the water discharged from the air conditioning system and the swimming pool, will be recycled.

As residents of AG block gets ready to accept their local bazaar in a new format, residents of other blocks can also join the celebration soon. "We are working on a proposal to lease out 6 more markets to the municipality," said P. K. Pradhan, secretary, Urban Development Department.



Artist's impression of the market