

# Salt Lake markets to get mall makeover

Somdatta Basu | TNN

**Kolkata:** The markets in Salt Lake which give the posh township a 'para' feel may soon be gone. In their place, will be swanky malls, which would bring the convenience of a supermarket within walking distance of residents.

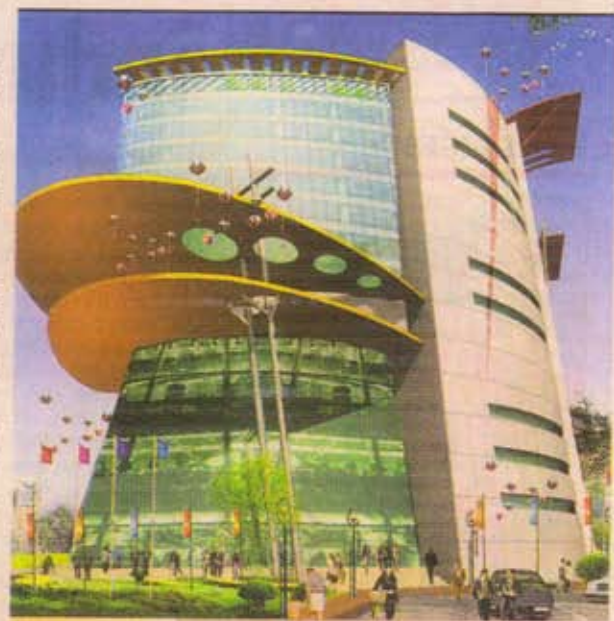
Bidhannagar Municipality has already given the go-ahead for construction of Baisakhi Market in AG block to replace the street market. BD market is next on the transformation list.

Apart from stocking the leading brands in garments and household necessities, the Baisakhi and BD malls will have two basement floors to accommodate around 200 cars at any point of time.

"It will help reduce traffic pressure on the streets since a large number of cars will be entering the markets every hour. The building space for Baisakhi market is almost 2 lakh sq feet on 42 cottahs of land. Both markets will be nine-storeyed buildings and the estimated cost for each is Rs 30 crore," said Bidhannagar Municipality's member, mayor-in-council, Nandagopal Bhattacharya. "Work has already begun and we will open the new markets in about 20 months," Bhattacharya added.

Though the planned markets will get contemporary designs, Bhattacharya vehemently denies that they will become malls. "All existing fruit sellers, shopkeepers, fish sellers and grocery shops will find place in the new markets, unlike a mall where only big brands own shopping space. Shop space will be sold to retailers as well as the big brands. Offices and IT firms can also buy space here," he said.

All the markets will be developed on the public-private-partnership (PPP) model. There are 14 markets spread over Salt Lake's 90 blocks. Oth-



## KICK-OFF

Baisakhi Market in AG block; BD block market is next

## NEXT IN LINE

CA, AE and CK markets

## SIZE

9-storeys high, two-floor basement parking for 200 cars

## COST

Rs 30 crore each

## COMPLETION

Jan 2010

## SHOP SPACE

- Fruit sellers, shopkeepers, fish sellers and grocery shop owners of the existing markets will find space in the mall
- Leading brands can buy space
- Companies and IT firms can also set up offices

er markets to be revamped are those of CA, AE and CK blocks. "The plan has been undertaken since the markets are in a dilapidated condition and need urgent repair," said Bhattacharya. Sources say space in the revamped markets will either be sold out after lotteries or through negotiations by the municipality.

The decision to demolish the old dilapidated markets and set up supermalls and shopping complexes was taken during former municipality chairman Dilip Gupta's tenure. "The projects have already been delayed. We want to start and fin-

ish work as soon as possible," said a civic official.

Work on the other markets has not yet been undertaken since it will not be viable at one go, an official said. Residents seem to have welcomed the move, though it means giving up the cosy familiarity of the old markets.

Fire services minister Pratim Chatterjee, a resident of Salt Lake said, "It is an urgent necessity to replace the existing old markets in various blocks of Salt Lake with new and modern malls. This will definitely increase the footfall and profits of sellers.

*Fins of India, Kolkata  
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