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PROFILE

H D Deve Gowda: Earthy Sophisticate

by Jved M Ansari and Stephen Davd classic irony: most politicians, by default or premonition of destiny, spend their lives travelling on one journey to one destination, no matter how unreachable -- to be Prime Minister, the Prince of Power. All their energies are directed to that end. Which is why Deve Gowda, as he

himself says, never painted, never wrote poetry, never played golf. How could he? Politics consumed him. Yet, during the fateful days before he was to become prime minister, he had not an inkling.

As he boarded the Indian Airlines flight to New Delhi on May 13. Deve Gowda's brain was working as it usually does: relentlessly. Churning out ideas, combinations, permutations, all the thinking that a man who makes kings must do. For as chief of the Karnataka Janata Dal he had emerged as one of the key regional chieftains who would help broker the next power configuration in New Delhi. Yet never once -- except in perhaps a less humble moment -did he see himself as the King

"I left Bangalore determined to make V P Singh the leader." he says. "I didn't even dream this would happen."

Yet it happened. Singh played the reluctant warhorse, Jyoti Basu the restrained one: and the 64-year-old Haradanahalli Doddegowda Deve Gowda, despite the pleas of his wife Channama not to accept a job that guaranteed headaches and little else, stepped forward. For a man who during campaigning had vowed hever to cross the borders of Karnataka", this was a big step. But two weeks is a lifetime in politics and he now said the "responsibility" had been "thrust" upon him and "there was no question of ducking it".

Deve Gowda is a Vokkaliga. member of a community which makes up 16 per cent of Karnataka's population, and he came to be known as Manninna Maga, son of the soil. After all, he was the son of a farmer, working in the paddy fields with his father Dodde Gowda through the morning. then cycling to the Lakshmma Venkataswamy Polytechnic from where he would earn a diploma in civil engineering in

At 19 years of age, he exhibited a keen interest in the welfare of farmers, something that would perhaps later influence his ordering the release of 6,000 million cubic metres of water to Tamil Nadu -- a controversial decision he took last year. Deve Gowda's justification: "The decision may be a harsh one but it was done to protect the interests of the ruots (farmers) on the other side of the border. So what if they are not our farmers?" Empathy aside, it was a display of political adroitness too - a similar demand for water in 1991 during S. Bangarappa's chief ministership had led to Kannada-Tamil clashes in Bangalore that left nearly 40 people dead.

will tell you, is the cause of Deve Gowda's lacking the spit and polish of Ramakrishna Hegde or the smooth oratory of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. No matter. His gifts are earthiness and a native common sense and the political asset of being able to commune with the common man. As chief minister, he ran virtually an open house, where securitymen stood back to let commoners step forward. It was not unusual to see crowds milling around his official residence Anugraha in Bangalore till late at night. Says Deve Gowda: "I

Yet the farmer in him, they

made it a point to listen to everybody who came to meet me." And this is not mere talk. Says A. Krishna, a long-time friend; "As someone who has seen him grow from the early 1950s. I can tell you that what marks him out from others is the rapport he is able to strike with the people he meets."

Being accessible also meant Deve Gowda would be forced to work long hours, sleeping at best no more than four or five hours a night. This did not worry him, as life for him began and ended with politics. According to B.L. Shankar, a Janata Dal MP from Chikmagalur: "He is an overtime politician. He is either discussing politics with people around him or over the telephone.

Frivolity of any sort does not seem to have a place in Deve Gowda's scheme of things. He appears to be a man of simple habits, of consistency, who visits Tirupati frequently, who doesn't touch alcohol or meat whose last excursion to a movie theatre was 16 years ago. Indeed, so caught up is Deve Gowda in politics that he no longer finds the time to listen to music, once a source of great relaxation for him.

Perhaps it follows that Deve

The soft-spoken Deve Gowda has been branded the "Devi Lal of Karnataka" by his critics. They accuse him of nurturing the political careers of two of his sons.

Gowda's manner is uncomplicated. He is a soft-spoken man who has abandoned aggressiveness for a more polite and humble 'demeanour. Some speak of a short fuse but it is a temper that dies down as fast as it rises up. In short, he is a straightforward man, and this probably accounts for his impressive rapport with leaders cutting across ideological lines -- from V.P. Singh to P.V.

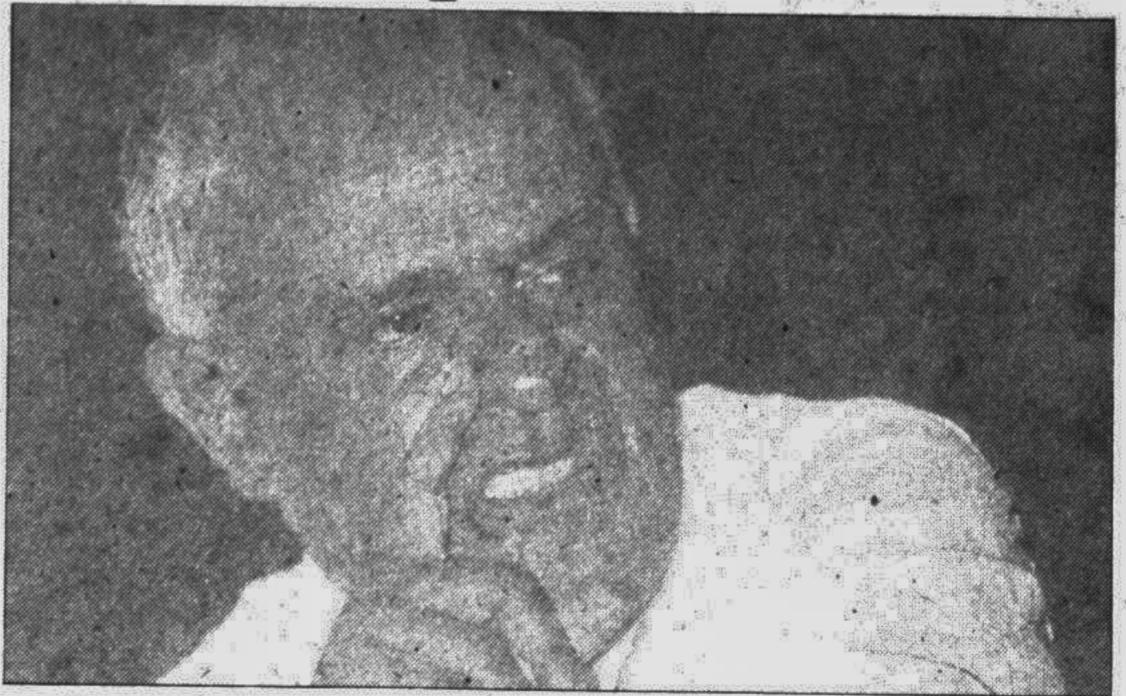
Narasimha Rao, from Mulayam Singh Yadav to Laloe Prasad Yadav. But none of this means that

he lacks political acumen. For instance, in a display of his savvy as chief minister in 1994, he pricked the BJP's balloon by defusing the controversy over flag-hoisting at the ldgah Maidan in Hubli by making a shrewd gesture. Along with C.M.Ibrahim, his state unit president, he persuaded Muslims to hoist the national flag at the maidan. This in effect denied the BJP an issue with which it could rouse passions.

But then, he has had his share of acrimony. Deve Gowda was branded the Devi Lal of Karnataka' by his critics, who accused him of "political nepotism". After all, two of his four sons are in politics: H.D. Revanna, an MLA from Holenarstpur and H.D. Kumaraswamy.

the newly-elected MP from Kanakapura. Deve Gowda replied that he had never masterminded the entry of his children into politics. For years Gowda was also criticised for being 'casteist', unable to look beyond the narrow concerns of his own community. Also, when he was a minister in Hedge's cabinet, he held what were considered 'lucrative' portfolios: publicworks department and then irrigation inviting charges of corruption though none were ever proved.

Meanwhile, Deve Gowda was busy revealing a certain sophistication that those who -



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dwelt too long on his earthiness may have missed. As chief minister, he was able to balance his self-confessed support for agricultural subsidies under attack, by the

International Monetary Fund -with support for economic lib-eralisation. In the second month after he took over in December 1994, he was the only chief minister to attend the World Economic Forum at Davos in Switzerland, which gave him a high profile abroad. Yet another sojourn to Singapore resulted in the first ever hi-tech Information Technology Park in Bangalore. And notwithstanding his own and his party's ideological op-position to Cargill and the advent of Kentucky Fried Chicken, Deve Gowda protected these multinational ventures to boost his state's image

and economy. Although he had been a member of the state assembly since 1962, and also leader of the opposition for years, he matured as a politician only in the late '80s. After a bitter battle with Hedge, he pulled out of the JD government in 1989 and joined the Janata party. His party was trounced in the elections and so was the JD. In

1991, Gowda stood for the Lok Sabha elections as an SJP candidate and won with a narrow margin. It was his threeyear stint in Parliament that saw him broaden his vision and shed his parochial concerns. He patched up with Hedge and returned to head the JD in 1993. His organisational skills were instrumental in helping

the JD come back to power in

Karnataka.

Now as prime minister. Deve Gowda's defining moment has truly arrived. That his future appears uncertain would be a gross understatement. For he must now try to reconcile conflicting ambitions of various United Front leaders even as he tries to run an efficient government. Also, he is known to be ideologically mal-leable and that can cut both ways. His flexibility will help bind disparate political groups together. But it will also result in him being seen as a leader without firm convictions Another thing: he has to work at improving his Hindi. "Give me three months and I will master it," he says confidently. Perhaps he knows that's more or less the time his detractors

INTERVIEW

"Congress will not be driving us"

Amid the jubilation of his supporters at Karnataka Bhawan following the all-important call from the President inviting him to form the government, H.D. Deve Gowda managed to keep his emotions in check, aware perhaps of the magnitude of the task that lay ahead of him. Retiring for sleep at 3 a.m. after meeting the United Front (UF) leaders, he was up again a few hours later. Principal Correspondent Javed M. Ansari caught up with the prime minister and interviewed him on how he plans to tackle his new responsibilities. Excerpts:

.g. You are heading a coalition. Some of the UF constituents even contested the elections against the Janata Dal. What is it, apart from the antipathy towards the BJP. that binds you together?

A. We may have had some differences but we share a common vision for the country. What binds us together is our commitment to secularism and the federal structure of the polity. We share a common view about the need to remove poverty and unemployment and to help the agriculture sector. We are bound by common goals of uplifting the lot of women and making the SC/STs. the minorities and the Backward Castes socially and

economically stronger. Q. There is a big question mark over the stability of your Government. For how long will you be able to carry along the various constituents?

A. I don't see why people have doubts about our survival. We have the support of over 300 MPs and 75 per cent of the votes polled were in favour of the parties that are in the UF or support us. The mandate was in favour of a coalition and we have responded to that. We may have not succeeded entirely in the past but we are all aware of the dangerous situation the country is in and the disastrous consequences that await us if we fail. It's not important how long I remain

prime minister or how long my Government lasts. What is important is how we govern and what we achieve.

Q. Won't the decision of the Left and some regional parties to stay away affect the smooth functioning of your Govern-

A. I don't think so. The left parties may or may not be in the Government but they are an integral part of the Front. The Left has been a guiding force and there is no ambiguity about their support. Likewise, the regional parties will play a constructive role in the functioning of the Government. In fact, this is the first government which is truly representative of the people of all regions of the country. Q. But your party colleague

Ramakrishna Hegde sees the UF as an "opportunistic" al A. It's his prerogative. Hegdeji is a very senior and

distinguished colleague. He has his own ideas and I'm not going to join issue with him. Q. The Congress backing is vital to you. Therefore, will you allow it to dictate terms from

the sidelines? A. There is no question of the Congress or anybody else driving us. I did not aspire to become the prime minister. Once all secular parties reposed confidence in me. could not refuse. I have no feat that any of the partners in the Front or the Congress will

9. But doesn't accepting the support of the Congress amount to making a compromise?

create problems.

A. The mandate favoured coalition of secular forces. So I will try and make use of the wisdom of all the supporting parties including the Congress. Q. In the past, the Congress has pulled down governments it had initially set out support ing. Do you have any fears that your Government will meet the same fate as that of Charan Singh and Chandra Shekhar?

A. You must be fair to the Congress. So far, they have not put any conditions whatsoever. The CWC on its own decided to support the formation of a secular government and even wrote to the President about it. don't want to go into why they made that decision. They took the decision even before we approached them. I have absolutely no doubt about the sincerity of the Congress party's support to the UF Government.

Q. It seems your personal

rapport with P.V. Narasimha Rao helped you to get the support of the Congress.

A. The support was extended to the UF. In fact, the Congress had made it clear that it would support the formation of a secular government. It had nothing to do with my relationship with Mr

9. Will you pursue the cases against Rao relating to St Kitts and the hawala scandal?

A. There will be no personal

What is really important is how we govern and what we achieve while we are in power and not how long we stay in government.

or political vendetta. I have never made such deals before and I don't plan to do so now. I don't want to entangle my Government in such things. 9. But what if Rao is

chargesheeted? A. The law always takes its own course and I cannot interfere with that.

Q. You have no experience of administration at the national level. How confident are you of making a success of your prime ministership?

A. I must admit I never ex-

pected to become the prime minister when I left Bangalore. I came to Delhi with the idea of helping my friends choose a leader. But the way things turned out. I was unable to reject the proposal made by senior leaders. Now that I have been entrusted with this responsibility. I will give it my best shot. There are a lot of senior and wise men in Parliament and I will try and make use of their wisdom and expertise. I realise my limitations. I'm not a very eloquent speaker and I have a problem with Hindi. But I also know that eloquent speeches alone cannot solve the common man's problems.

Q. Within the UF and the Congress there are some basic differences on the economic policy. As chief minister, you were closer to what Manmohan Singh preached than what was propagated by the left parties. What policy will you follow?

A. I want to make this point

clear that almost all chief ministers, irrespective of their party ideologies, were in favour of reforms, be it in West Bengal, Rajasthan or Gujarat. A few days ago, they (the Shiv Sena-BJP Government in Maharashtra) approved the Enron deal despite all the tall claims they had made earlier. There may be some minor areas of difference but in principle, all state governments have welcomed investments. I will sit with them and try and

are giving his Government.

come to some understanding. 9. Will you roll back re-A. No. The decisions that

have been taken will be honoured. But in future when we tackle some of the pending issues, I will take everybody into confidence. That's why we have already set up a subcommittee which will work out a common approach. Q. Has the Congress sug-

gested the economic line it would want you to adopt? A. I have not discussed

anything with anybody. But any future action that my Government takes will only be done after due consultation with friendly parties. I will also take the Congress into confi-

Q. As chief minister, you were involved in the Cauvery dispute. Now as prime minister, you will have to decide on the issue. Won't this create a problem with the DMK which is heading the Government in Tamil Nadu and is also an ally of your government?

A. The day I was elected leader of the UF, I made it clear that I will try my best to sort out the matter in a fair manner. I don't think it will be a problem.

9. The UF's whole plank is built around countering communalism. As prime minister, how do you propose to tackle this problem?

A. There is absolutely no question of any compromise with communalism, I would like to ensure that all contentious issues are sorted out amicably.

Q. How do you propose to deal with the trouble in Kashmir?

A. My Government will do everything it can to solve the problem. I would like to sit down with my colleagues and all those who can come up with a solution.

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Thursday 20th June (All programmes are in local time We recommend progra-mmes printed in bold. There may be changes in the programmesi

BTV

3:00 Onening Annumcement A Quran Programme Summary 3:18 Recitation From the Geeta 3:15 Retelecast of selected programme from TV Archive 4:00 News m Bangla 4:15 Khelar Jagot: 4:45 Cartoon Film: Tom And Jery 5:01 News in Bangla 5:25 National Television School Debate 6:00 News in Bangla 6:38 Esho Para Shikhi: Mass Education 7:00 The News 7:05 Jiboner Alo 7:25 Nazrul Songs 8:00 News in Bangla 8:40 E-Shaptaher Natok 10:00 News in English 10:25 Janmabhumi 10:35 Film Show: The Equalizer 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Friday's programme 11:40 Close down

BBC

Hours 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 The Tourist 10:00 BBC News day 1:00 BBC World Headlines 1:05 Under The Sun 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Auction 3:06 BBC World News 3:30 Time Out Top Gear 4:00 BBC Newsdesk 6:00 **BBC World Headlines 6:05 Horizon** 7:00 BBC World News 7:15 World Business Report 7:30 BBC World Newshour Asia and Pacific 8:38 Time Out : More Rhodes Around Britain 9:00 BBC World Headline: 9:05 The Tourist 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out: Nature 11:00 The World Today 1:00 BBC World Headlines 1:05 Correspon 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Tomorrow's World 3:99 BBC World Report inc. World Business Report/24 Hours 5:00 BBC World News 5:18 Newsnight

CHANNEL V

VJ Trey 12:00 Over The Edge VJ Frame By Frame

STAR PLUS

Mutant Ninua Turtles 7:30 Gi Joe 8:00 Saber Ruder And The Star Sherrifs 8:30 The Adventures U1 Black Beauty 9:00 Aerobics By Style 9:30 Nanny and The Protessor 10:00 Mr Belveders 10:30 Bur Wolf's Menus 11:00 E Feature Kids In The Hall 11.30 Gatrielle 12:30 Santa Barbara 1:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 2.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show 3:00 Reinington Steele 4:00 Burt Wolf's Menus 4:30 El Feature : Kitts in The Hall 5:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turties 5:30 The Adventures Of Black Beauty 6:00pm Lost in Space 7:00 Home and Away 7:30 Entertainment Tonight 8:00 MASH 8:30 21 Jump Bold and The Beautiful 11:00 Santa Barbara 12:00mm Hard Copy 12:30 Beverly Hills 90210 1:00 The Fall Guy 2:30 Entertainment Tonight 3:00 The Oprah Winfrey Show 4:00 Hard Copy 4:30 Home and Away 5:06 The Solivans 5:30 Gabrielle

STAR Sports

7:30am The Umbro Under 21 Cup Of Toulon England vs Brazil 8:30 7:30am Film Club Jail Bait The

7:00am Rewind VJ Sophya 8:00

Jump Start VJ. Trey 10:00 Frame by Frame 12:00noon The Vibe VJ Luke 1:00 By Demand VJ Trey 2:00 Rewind VJ Sophya 3:80 Big Bang VJ Alessandra 4.30 By Demand VJ Trey 5:30 Music Upitate Tokyo 6:08 Rewind VJ Sophiya 6:30 The Vibe VJ Luke 7:36 First Day First Show 8:00 Big Bang VJ Alessandra 9:00 Video con Flashback 9:30 Classic Ruck 10:30 First Day First Show 11:00 Rewind VJ Sophiya 11:30 The Ride Sophya 12:30 Big Bang VJ Ales sandra 2:00 By Demand VJ Trey 3:00 Billboard US Countdown 4:30

6:30am Voltron 7:08 Immage

Gillette World Sport Special 9:00 1995 Wimbledon Official Fdm 10:00 The European Tour Slaev Hall North umberland Challenge Hirs 11:00 12:00 The Asian Football Show Trans World Sport 1 30 Statesman Vintage & Classic Car Rally . 2:00 Futbol Mundial 3:00 4:00 mside PGA Tour 4:30 1995

Directors Cut (Arabic Subtitles) 5:30 Family : Quiet Victory 12 (Arabic Subtitles) 11:30 Future Shocke The Navigator: A Mediaeval Odyssey 12 (Hindi Subtitles) 1:30 Classic Love Me Tender PG (Hindi Subtitles: 3.30 Comedy | Local Hero 12 (Hind: Subtitles) 5:30 Classic The Mark Of Zono 12 (Hindi Subtriles) 7:30 frans World Sport 24 7:00 Malbore side prophets 18 (Arabic Subtitles)



Remington Steele on Star Plus at 3 pm today

Monza 12:00 That Kickboxing Futbol Mundial 2:00 Prime Boxing Fights TBC 3:30 Malboro League 96 CNFL Highlights 4:08 Australian Football League High lights 11 4:36 International Motor soorta News

STAR MOVIES

(Arabic Subtitles) 9:30 Comedy Carry On Camping 18 (Arabic Subtities 5 30 Film Club - Me And Veronica 18 (Arabic Subtitles)

ZEE TV

5 30am inforamment (TMM) 6:00 News 6:38 Jagran 7:00 ZED Management 7:30 ZED Networking 8-08 ZEB- Nays A To Z 8:30 More Ghar Ana Zindagi 9:00 Ghoomta Aanta 9:30 HFF 12:00 Commander 12:30 Rasna Spread Fk Minute 1:00 ZED Chota Byte 1:30 Asian Sky

Shop 2:30 Tara 3:00 Falin Chakkar Show! 4:30 Faasle 5:00 O'Mana 3 30 Captain Cook Shafii Dawar 4:00 film Deewane 4:30 Jaanbaz 5:00 ZED Management 5:30 Himgiri Ka Veer 6:00 Horn Honge Kaarnyab 6:30 Att Mad Show 7:00 Zaike Ka Safar 7:30 Gaane Anjaane 8:00 Rasna Kya Scene Hai 8:30 Gopaljee 9:00 Colgate Gel Yoodlee Yo 9:30 Dastaan 10:00 Duniya 10:30 The News 11:00 Mano Ya Ra Mano 11:39 Hum Paanch 12:00 Tara 12:30 Parampara 1:00 Asian Paints

Wheel Of Fourtune (Game 12:00 Zamana Badal Gaya (Senal) 12:30am Ravan 1:30 Mere Message Men Geet 2:00 Yeadon Ki Yaadon Ke Rang 1:30 Films Chakkar 2:00 Celeste

PTV

8:00am Tilawat Aur Tarpmai Hamd/Naat 8:28 Cartoon 8:39 Khabrain 8:45 Cut Piece 9:20 Aa hang & Roshni 9:49 Phool Chandi 10:05 Sona Chandi (Drama Serial) 10:30 Buttons & Rustys (Eng. Film) 10:55 Milli Naghma 11:00 Khabrain 11:18 Aabshaar (Music Programme) 11:55 Tele Play (Drama Serial) 12:45pm (lawaak 12:55 Quran-e-Hakeem & Bismillah 1:15 Mugaddar (Drama Serial) 2:00 Putihar (Drama Serial 2:45 Perspective & Health Forum 3:40 Taleemi Maloomat 4:35 Aurat Aur Clanson 5:05 Home Economics 5:25 Humaray Saath 5:55 Varna 6:25 Aiou Courses 7:05 Muqabil Hai Aaina 7:20 Ainaik Wala Jinn 7:45 English News 8:05 Jawaan Sangeet 8:45 Eendhan (Drama Serial) 9:00 Break for Headline News 10:00 Khabarnama & Commercial News 10:35 Mast Mast 8Y IAN FLEMING Sanyo 11:15 Urdu Feature Film & | DRAWING BY HORAC Khas Khas Khabrini Close down

SONY ET

8:30am Yaadon Ki Baarat 9:00 The Three Stooges 9:30 Dennis The Menace 10:00 i Dream Of Jeannie 10:30 Ek Rang Lamhe Hazaar 11:00 Ghaave (Serial) 11:30 Cine Matinee Hinds Feature Film 2:30pm Kismoat (Serial) 3:00 Zamin Asman (Serial) 3:30 Mere Message Meri Geet 4:00 Wheel of Fourtune (Game

(Serial) 5:30 The Three Stooges 6:00 Dennis The Menace 6:30 Dream of Jeannie 7:80 Mere Mes

8:10am Shastriyo Sangeet 8:20 Binodon 8:30 Sur Sangeet 9 00 Janani 9:30 Naksha 10:00 Nazrul Geeti 10:15 Lokgeeti 10:30 Chuti Chuti 12:00noon ETV Programme 12:30 Nabi Ganjer Daitya Serial 1:00 Janani (Senal) 1:30 Bengali 90:30am Jevan Ke Rang 1:30 Mohd. Movie Club Film Show 5:05 Neuril Rafi Special 2:30 Nasir Hussain Programme 5:30 News 5:35 Sa Special 3:30 Amitabh Bachchan hithya Samiskriti 6:00 Pafli Katha Special 4:30 Dance Dance 5:30 6:30 Chakry Khabar 6:55 Padds

DD 7

Pishier Barmi Baksho 7:30 Bangla Sambad 8:00 Sur Sangeet 8:30 Dhaw (Senal) 9:00 Darpachurno 9:30 Swapner Bazar (Serial) 10:00 Bengali Movie Club Film Show

EL TV

Special 7:30 Nasir Hussain Special 8:30 Amitabh Bachchan Special 9:38 Dance Dance 10:30 The Music Show 11:00 Namaskar 11:30 Shatrani 12:00 Jugal Jodi 1:00 R D Burman Special 2:00 Party Time 3:00 Wonder Wings Amar Prem 3:38 Tarannum 4:00 Ortem Hit Thi Hit Hai 4:30 Song Yatra 5:00 Young Buzz 5:30 Tarane 6:30 Dev Anand Special 7:30 Fantasy Kal Bhi Aaj Bhi 8:00 Peo-

ple's Club 8:30 Liberty Public De-

Jeevan Ke Rang 6:30 Mohd Rafi Navras 10:30 Newsline 11:00 Ghungreo 12:00 Sargam

ZEE CINEMA

mand 9:30 Gambler 10:00 Society

8:30 Tarana 9:00 Hit Hai Fit Hai 9:30 Kotwal Saab 12:15 Off Screen 12:45 Mama Bhanja 3:30 Ikke Pe Ikka 4:00 Raja Aur Rank 6:45 Maalamaal 9:30 Songs 10:00 Love In Simila 12:15 Box Office 12:45 Evan Doye Srimantaguru (Telugu)

Garfield ®







A LIST OF THINGS I'M NOT GOING TO DO TODAY!

by Jim Davis

