

A Month After Abduction, Kalpana Chakma Yet to be Rescued

by Morshed Ali Khan, back from New Lalyaghona, Rangamati

KALPANA Chakma, the 24-year-old Chakma girl and the Organising Secretary of the Hill Women's Federation (HWF), abducted at gun-point in the early hours of June 12, is yet to be traced.

At around 1-30 am of the night, a group of men armed with automatic weapons surrounded her village home in the remote hilly village of Lalyaghona under Baghaichari thana in Rangamati district of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and abducted her, close relatives of the family described.

"We were asleep when someone called out from outside and wanted to know who were inside the house," said Kalpana's mother, 60-year old Badhani Chakma, "then they cut down the latch of the door from outside and entered the house."

"They kept powerful torch-light on our face and took away my younger son, Khudiram saying that 'sir wanted to talk to him' continued a distressed Badhani." Few minutes later they took away my elder son Kalicharan and my daughter Kalpana leaving behind myself and Kalicharan's wife."

Kalicharan, a farmer and the bread-earner of the family, said that the three were, at one point, blindfolded and tied by the hands near the well of the house and were asked to sit down.

"Some were wearing fatigues and some had lungis tied up to their waist. They first took Khudiram from us," Kalicharan said. Asked in what language the intruders were talking, Kalicharan replied, "in Bengali."

Khudiram described how he escaped: "I was asked to step into the water in the low-lying area near the well. As soon as I did so, someone shouted 'shoot him'. Sensing imminent death I somehow untied my hand, removed fold around my eyes and started running in the waist-deep water. I could hear one gun-shot behind me but I kept running."

Kalicharan said that after they led Khudiram away, Kalpana was taken away from his side. "On hearing the gun-shot and the shoutings few yards away I untied my hand, removed the fold around my eyes and jumped into the water, they shot at me once and as I ran I could hear Kalpana



Kalpana (middle) leading a protest against oppression on women in the hills last year.

cry out 'Dada, Dada', Kalicharan described to reporters and lawyers sitting in front of his tribal house.

With the break of the daylight the two brothers came out of their hidings and informed the villagers. Kalicharan rushed to the Baghaichari thana about two miles away with a khaki ammunition

camp and asked them to return Kalpana, they started to throw abuse at me."

"On March 19 last, seven Chakma houses were burnt down following the killing of a Bengali settler in the area," said Prashanta Chakma, Headmaster of the Ogulchhari Junior High School.

Villagers and family mem-

bers said that the army officer in question had visited Kalpana at the end of March and told her that he was sorry for all he had done and he hoped that villagers would return to the village soon.

"He knew Kalpana had failed to attend the World Conference on Women in Beijing last year due to fund constraint and talked to her on

Kalpana, a student of BA at the local college, was always a strong and vocal activist for the cause of the Chakma people and she regularly attended conferences, discussions at the national level and played a prominent role in this respect.

various problems, he also sought her help to normalise the situation in the area," said Kalicharan's wife who claimed to have been present there.

Local youths' said that Kalpana, a student of BA at the local college, was always a strong and vocal activist for the cause of the Chakma people and she regularly attended conferences, discussions at the national level and played a prominent role in this respect.

Prior to her abduction, she, along with the HWF and Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP), a students' organisation of the Chakmas, had been campaigning for the independent candidate, Bijoy Ketan Chakma in the general elections who lost to an AL candidate.

The OC of Baghaichari, Shahidullah, also the Investigative Officer (IO) of the case, confirmed taking Khudiram's statement as identifying the abductors, but said that despite his best efforts to rescue Kalpana, his investigation was hampered due to various reasons.

"Do you think we have easy access to the hilly areas? Every time we go to the interior for any investigation, we have to seek help from the army," said the OC claiming that there was confusion in the abduction case of Kalpana and it could take long to conclude the probe.

When asked what confusion could arise, the OC said that a lot of rumours were going about, "some say she is in Rangamati, some say she is in an army camp and some say she has been taken away by the Shantibahini." The OC said admitting that he had no clue of the case yet.

During the investigation it was found out that the First Information Report (FIR), written by the OC from Kalicharan's description, did not match the one recorded by the TNO of Baghaichari. The statement given to the TNO by

recovered by the police nor any of the thirteen persons accused in the case was arrested.

Incidents of June 27 almost cut off communications between the Bengali and the Chakma areas. This correspondent had to change boats as the Bengali boatmen refused to ply into Chakma areas. The Chakma boatman, in turn, did

not come into the Bengali areas.

In Rangamati, about a ten-hour journey from Lalyaghona by engine boat across the picturesque region of the hill tracts, Shah Alam, the Deputy Commissioner, commenting on the case said that it now lay

with the police and the law would take its own course.

On June 12, high officials of the local administration visited the spot and they are conducting investigation," the DC said adding that the case No 2/12 at the Baghaichari thana in this respect was under investigation.

The SP of Rangamati, Md Nurul Anwar, said that his administration was under pressure from above to resolve the crisis as soon as possible and he was hundred per cent hopeful that Kalpana would be freed. He added that nothing could be determined until Kalpana was released and gave her own statement.

"There is no legal barrier to interrogate a suspect, wherever he is, and we have done so with the Army Lieutenant in question," the SP said, "the Army Brigadier commander has given me permission to visit any of the 180 army camps in the hilly areas," he said.

When asked how many of the camps he had visited, the SP said that the terrain in the area was difficult and the communications bad, therefore it was not possible to visit any.

At the Rangamati Army Headquarters, the Commander Major told this correspondent that the army had conducted its own investigation into the matter and sent its report to the local administration.

"If you have any more query, please contact the Inter Services Public Relations, they are the people to represent the army to the press," the Commander Major concluded.

Meanwhile, some Chakma villagers claimed that they had spotted Kalpana being shifted in a jet-boat from an army camp at Shilchari Mukhi at the intersection of Tangumachara Mukh and Khagrachari Mukh on June 18. This, however could not be confirmed by any official.

In the hilly areas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where a ceasefire is in force until July 30, going missing is a common phenomenon for both the Bengali settlers and the Chakmas.

In every village, both Chakma and Bengali people come to tell how many had gone missing within the last few days. In the case of Kalpana's abduction, the local administration seemed to be experiencing quite an uneasy situation. The matter has been reported by national and international media as well as different local organisations. It is hoped that the local and national authorities will do everything to find out and free Kalpana immediately.



Kalpana's mother Badhani, sister-in-law and Kalicharan, the eldest brother in front of their house. The abductors raided the house and took Kalpana away.

Kalicharan was recorded with clear facts and figures while the FIR written by the OC lacked clarity. No one read out the FIR to Kalicharan before accepting it, it was alleged.

The abduction of Kalpana immediately escalated the prevailing tension among the Chakmas and Bengali settlers in the area. The Bengali settlements in the hilly areas which intensified in the later part of eighties, had concentrated mainly in the thana sadars, district headquarters and other areas almost always separated from the Chakma areas.

On June 15, the Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP) and the Hill Women's Federation (HWF) brought out a protest procession in the area demanding release of Kalpana and arrest of the abductors.

Then on June 27, the PCP and the HWF called for a siege

in the Baghaichari area. As the Bengali settlers resisted the siege, a clash broke out between the Chakmas and the Bengali which left Rupam Chakma, a class-ten student of the local school, shot dead. Although confirmed dead, Rupam's body could never be

recovered by the police nor any of the thirteen persons accused in the case was arrested.

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Kalpana (right) with a friend last year.

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The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Saturday 13th July (All programmes are in local time. We recommend programmes printed in bold. There may be changes in the programmes)

BTB 3:00pm Opening Announcement Al-Quran 3:10 Reiteration from the Tripitak 3:15 Movie of the Week 4:00 News in Bangla 5:00 News in Bangla 5:25 Bantshori: Folk Songs 6:00 News in Bangla 6:05 Shantichar 6:30 Monir Mukure 7:00 News in English 8:00 News in Bangla 8:30 Mati-o-Manush: Programme Based on Agricultural Development 9:00 Ashmat

12:05 Everyman 1:00 BBC World Headlines 1:05 The Tourist 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out Tomorrow's World 3:00 BBC World News 3:30 Time Out Summer Holiday 4:00 BBC World Headlines 4:05 Horizon 5:00 BBC World News 5:20 Britain in View 5:50 Earth Report 6:00pm BBC World Headlines 6:05 Under the Blue Flag 7:00 BBC World News 7:20 This Week 8:00 BBC World News 8:30 Time Out Building Sights 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 Correspondent 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out Augustan 11:00 BBC World News 11:20 This Week 12:00pm BBC World News 12:20 The Art Marathon 1:00 BBC World Headlines

STAR PLUS 6:30am Voltron 7:00 Dungeons and Dragons 7:30 Around the World in 80 Days 8:00 Count Duckula 8:30 Saber Rider & the Star Sherif 9:00 Capital Critters 9:30 Zoolife With Jack Hanna 10:00 Katts & Dog 10:30 Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea 11:30 The Wild West 12:30 Movie: "Gentleman's Agreement" 2:30 Movie Classics: "Angel and the Badman" 4:30 Return of TV Censored Bloopers and Practical Jokes 5:30 Movie Television 6:00pm Fantasy Island 7:00 Thailand Panorama 7:30 The Addams Family 8:00 The Simpsons 8:30 Baywatch 9:30 Star Trek The Next Generation 10:30 LA Law 11:30 Cade 3 12:00pm COPS 12:30 Mystery Movies Prime Suspect III 2:30 Movie

STAR Sports 6:00am Wild M Cycle 7:00pm German GP H1 6:30 World Cup of Squash 7:30 Australian Football League Highlights 8:30 World Westing Federation Mama 9:30 NBA Inside Stuff 10:00 Galleto World Sport Special 10:30 Cricket Week 1 11:00 Asian Football Show 2 12:00 World M/Cycle Champs German GP H1 12:30 World Cup of Squash 1:30 Formula Nippon From Suzuka Circuit Japan 3:00 Inside PGA Tour 3:30 Creaket Week 4:30 Live Cricket 96 Benson & Hedges Cup Final 7:00 Lunch 7:30 Asia Sport Show 12:00 Same Day Delay Formula One World Champs Britain Quality ing 1:00 Same Day Delay The European Tour Scottish Open Day 4:00 Australian Football League Highlights 5:00 Galleto World Sport Special 5:30 International Motorsports News

Hindi Subtitles: 9:00 Bio Bolly wood 9:30 Battle Cries: Sank The Bismarck (Hindi Subtitles) 11:30 Gold This is My Life 15 (Hindi Subtitles) 1:30 Fright Night Thriller: Mirage 18 (Hindi Subtitles) 5:30 Comedy - A Private Function 15 (Hindi Subtitles)

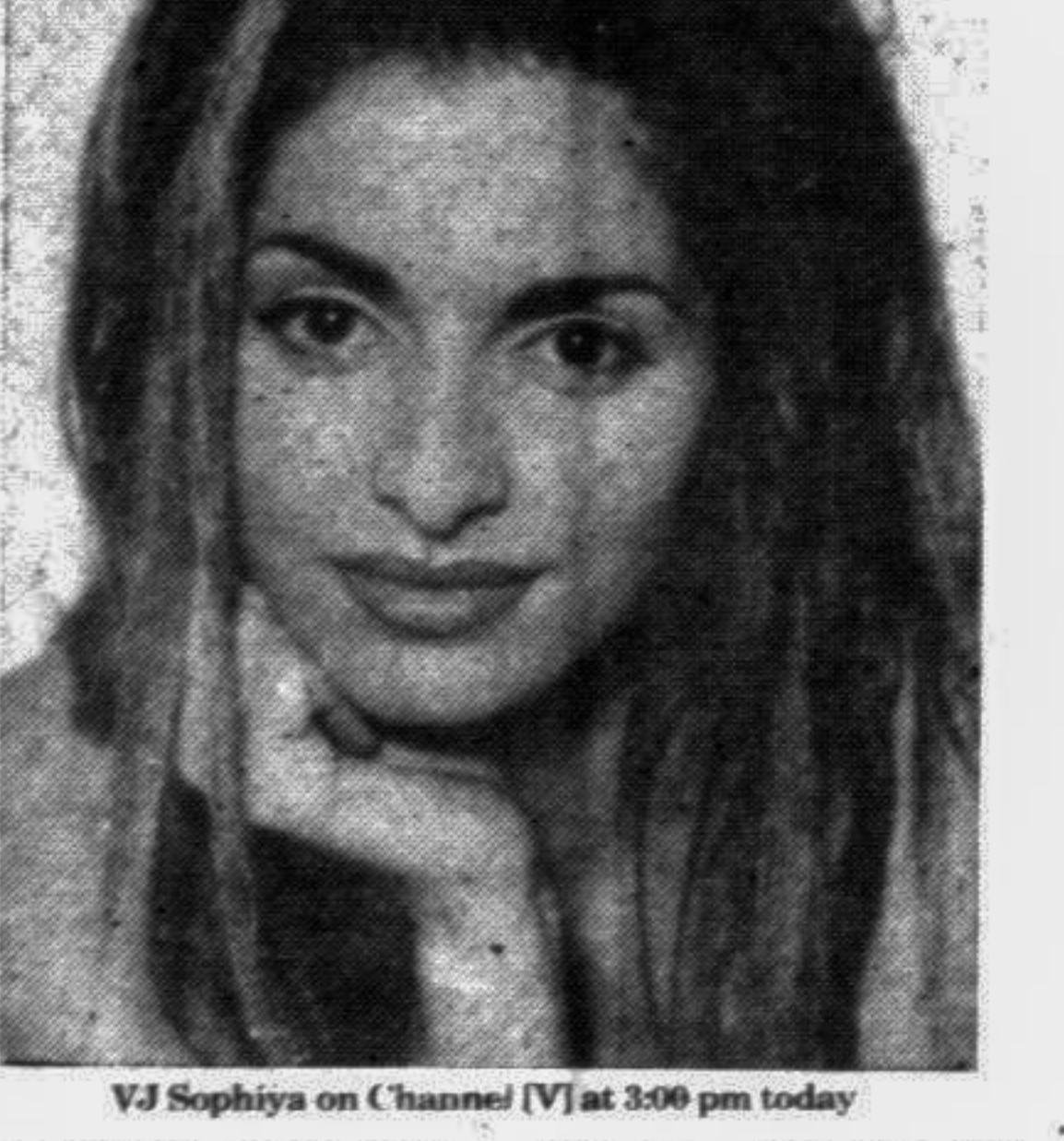
ZEE TV 6:00 News 6:30 Jagran 7:00 A To Z Computer 8:30 All Out 9:00 Bournvita Day Contest 9:30 Yo Namaste 10:00 Ad Mad Show 10:30 Gaane Anjane 11:00 Shah Dawat 11:30 Cartoons 12:00 Philips Top Ten 1:00 Top Mol Ka Bol 1:30 Asian Sky Shop 2:30 Nerotic Ashana 3:00 Positive Health Show 3:30 Zaika Ka Safar 4:00 No Problem 4:30 TVS Sa Re

EL TV 6:30 Ched Chad 7:30 Music Time 8:30 Taranne Aur Fasane 9:30 Best of the Best 10:30 Lakhani Advance Booking 11:00 Zero Se Hero Anugam Khar Show 11:30 Kar 12:00 Special 01:00 Special 02:00 Special 3:00 Fat or Fit 3:30

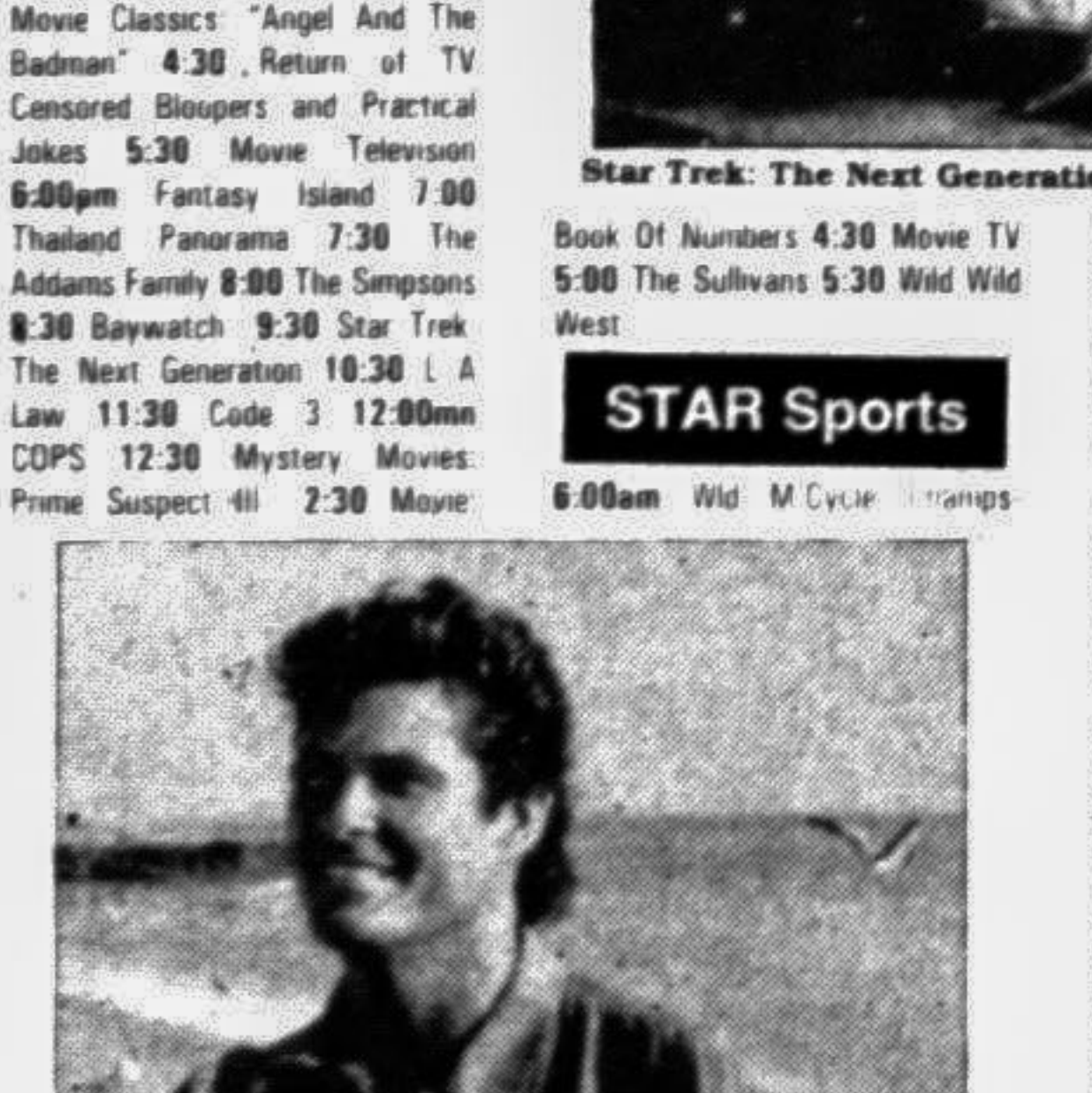
PTV 8:00am Tawaf Aur Tarjuma Hamd Naat 8:20 Cartoon 9:10 Phool Khushboo 9:25 Das takhwan 9:40 Mehmaan 10:05 Aap Ki Anwar Maqsood 10:30 English Film: Tarzan 10:55 Milli Nagma 11:00 Khabram 11:10

SONY ET 8:30 am Kuch Dil Ne Kaha 9:00 Yaadon Ki Baar 9:30 Cine Mat

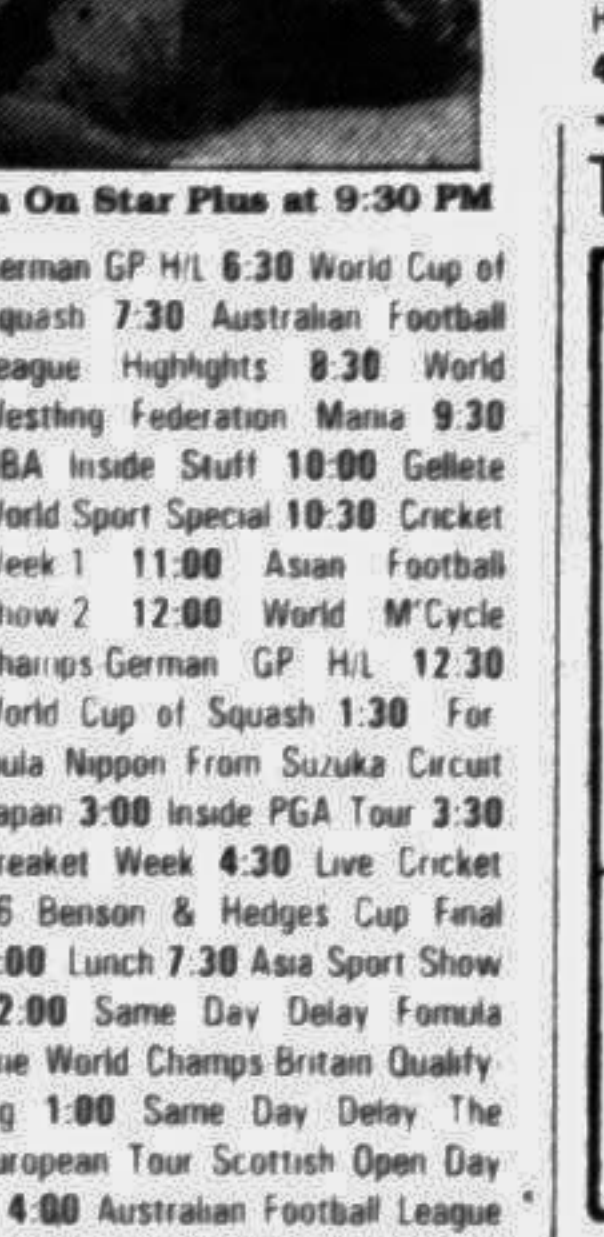
ZEE CINEMA 8:30 Mera Saaya 11:15 Manzil Manzil 2:30 Angan Ki Kab 6:00 Zidd 8:45 Box Office 9:30 Sita Aur Gita 12:30 Akri Daaku 3:45 Shankar Dada



VJ Sophiya on Channel [V] at 3:00 pm today



Star Trek: The Next Generation on Star Plus at 9:30 PM



STAR Sports 6:00am Wild M Cycle 7:00pm



James Bond DRIVING BY HORAK

BBC 6:00am BBC World News 6:20 Britain in View 7:00 BBC World News 7:10 Newsnight 8:00 BBC World News 8:20 Window On Europe 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 Correspondent 10:00 BBC World News 10:20 The Arts Marathon 11:00 BBC World News 11:20 Window On Europe 12:00noon BBC World Headlines

CHANNEL V 8:30am Asian Top 20 VJ Nune 10:30 Big Bang Weekend VJ Alessandra 12:30 Billboard US Countdown 2:30 The Ride VJ Tray 3:00 Reward VJ Sophiya 4:00 House Of Noise VJ Luke 5:30 TVI 1's 6:00pm The Vibe Weekend VJ Luke 8:00 BPL Oye! 9:00 The



Boy watch on Star Plus at 6:30 tonight.