# UN Raises Alarm on Megacities and Food Security

HE failure of development to provide a humane quality of life, a basic standard of living to vast numbers of the global population is a substantial smear on the face of the earth. If poverty-alleviation is the key word in today's definition of development, the focus on development has to be on the life-sustaining needs of food, shelter, health and education.

The vulnerability of millions of people worldwide is caused by their "inability to compete on an equal basis for resources and opportunities. Vulnerability is often caused by marginalisation in and exclusion from the socio-economic mainstream and decisionmaking processes. If vulnerability is to be reduced, there is a need to improve and ensure access by members of vulnerable groups to shelter, finance, infrastructure, basic social services, safety nets and decisionmaking processes," reports the Habitat Agenda: Goals and Principles, Commitments and Global Plan of Action, 1996.

Under this illusion of progress, it is indeed a poor reflection of our times that while entering the 21st century, the twin basic human needs of shelter, and food still elude a vast proportion of the global population. It is in this climate of affluence and want. of prosperity and deprivation and the failure of the international community to address basic survival needs that the final two United Nations gatherings of this century take place — the June 1996 International Conference on **Human Settlements (Habitat 2)** held in Istanbul and the Summit on Food Security to be held in Rome in November

The first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat 1) was held in Vancouver in 1976. The twenty years since Habitat 1. have seen phenomenal changes in the political, social, economic, environmental and technological makeup of circumstances prevailing in human society. Some 1.1 billion people in the world live in a state of absolute poverty with income and consumption levels below nationally-defined poverty levels. According to the 1994 Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific. these poor do without many of life's basic necessities on an income of less than \$370 a year and with very little access to resources. Furthermore, the rural poor represent more than 80 per cent of the world's impoverished people in developing countries.

According to an Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) 1996 report, "the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific grew at an average 7.8 per cent in 1995 against a world average of 2.6 per cent, but unless development begins to reach the region's poor it will not be sustainable. With some 80 per cent of Asia's 800 million poor living in rural areas. the rural infrastructure needs to be further developed, including rural industrialisation. Yet by itself, rural areas cannot absorb surplus labour as industrialisation proceeds and the share of agriculture in the

economy declines." In 1991, countries with the poorest 20 per cent of the world's population enjoyed only 3.6 per cent of the world's income (down from 4.9 per cent in 1960), while the richest fifth enjoyed almost 64 per cent of the

world's income. The disturbing 1900 picture of a highly skewed distribution of national income has manifested itself in the few rich growing richer and the masses of the poor getting poorer. Regions of high growth and favourable performance exist side by side with areas of mass poverty and deprivation. There is a polarisation of growth and resources, which has resulted in a spectrum of complex issues and problems.

While the rate of population growth has on the whole decelerated worldwide in the past twenty years, the world's population has increased from some 4.2 billion to about 5.7 billion with an increasing young population, nearly one third under 15 years of age and an increasing urban population. By the close of the century, some 50 per cent of the global population will be urban residents.

Urban poverty, a spillover effect of rural poverty is also an increasing phenomenon and by all indications, here to stay. Characteristics of urban poverty do not differ greatly from rural deprivation either the lack of life-sustaining means and services. Thus there is a need to be alert to the preponderance of national poverty-alleviation measures, both in rural and urban areas.

Desperate rural-urban migrants add to an urban labour force already bloated and increasing. Allen and Thomas in Poverty and Development in the 1990s', use Frantz Fanon's graphic term 'the wretched of the earth' to refer to the labour force in the manufacturing sector of the urban economy. "It is widely recognised that life is grim for poor factory workers and their families who are caught up in the process of industrialisation, living in the urban slums of industrialising countries. They are among the 'wretched of the earth', those people who, if the world has progressed, have certainly been the victims of that progress."

Megacities

Human settlements this century have been particularly characterised by the fast pace of rural-urban migration and the spillover effects of the density of the urban population into megacities (settlements that are home to more than 10 million people). Asian cities make up the bulk of the increase in the world's urban population. The State of the World Population', 1996 report by UNFPA, states that by 2015. 17 of the world's megacities will be in Asia and by 2020, over fifty per cent of Asians will be urbanites. Tokyo is forecast to become the world's most populous city with 29 million people, followed by Bombay with 27 million. Jakarta with 21 million. Karachi with 20 million, and Beijing and Dhaka with 19 mil-

According to the Habitat Agenda: Global Plan of Action. by Raana Haider

### The global city 2025 6 in 10 2170 calories in sub-Saharan More than 5 in 10 people will person in 10 be urban - for the first time in lived in a city the history of •World Health Organization says growth of mega-cities will become biggest threat to health in 21st century

1996, by the turn of the century, more than 3 billion people - one half of the world's population - will live and work in urban areas. The most critical problems facing these urban residents include "inadequate financial resources, lack of employment opportunities, spreading homelessness and expansion of squatter settlements, increasing poverty and a widening gap between rich and poor, growing insecurity and rising crime rates, inadequate and deteriorating building stock, services and infrastructure, lack of health and educational facili-

More than half the world's

people will be living in

urban areas in 10 years

time and the biggest

populations will be in

developing countries,

according to a report

on Wednesday by

the U.N. Population

POPULATION OF WORLD'S

LARGEST CITIES (in millions

population over 10 million in each.

There will be 27 such cities in 2015

20.80/14.85

ourse: The State of World Population 1966, UNFP.

2015 (projected) / 1990

increase in urban

ties, improper land use, insecure land tenure, rising traffic congestion, increasing pollution, lack of green spaces. inadequate water supply and sanitation, uncoordinated urban development and an increasing vulnerability to disaster." Disastrous ingredients for a greater disaster.

Such a scenario has prompted United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali to describe the Habitat-2 conference as "essential for the future of our planet" and Secretary-General of the Habitat-2 Conference, Wally N'Dow to warn that "the

**URBAN POPULATION BY REGION (in millions)** 

North America 223

Latin America/ 601

North America 313

WORLD'S URBAN POPULATION RISES

1995 2,764

2025 5,341

task ahead was nothing less that negotiating the survival of the human species."

#### Food Security

The paradox of availability versus accessibility may be the key dilemma in development. An area where the paradox is most visible is food security or of more relevance in many countries — the hunger issue. The World Bank in its Policy Study, "Poverty and Hunger Issues and Options for Food Security in Developing Countries, 1986 defines food security "as the access by all people at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life." The essential elements are the availability of food and the ability to acquire it. The first has today generally been. assured; the second has not, and in fact in many societies is declining. As noted by the eminent Indian economist, Amartya Sen, "starvation is the characteristic of some people not having enough food to eat. It is not the characteristic of there being not enough food to eat. While the latter can be a cause of the former, it is but one of many possible causes."

The irony of the situation has been referred to by a number of researchers. While agriculture still constitutes the main economic sector the uneven distribution of the fruits of production does not allow a major part of the population a reasonable nourishment note Bondestam and Bergstrom in Poverty and Population Control', 1980. Jan K Black in Development in Theory and Practice', 1991 remarks that hunger normally does not reflect lack of food production or productive capacity but rather maldistribution of land, income and opportunities Similarly, higher levels of agricultural production, for example, do not necessarily imply lower levels of malnutrition finds Jodi Jacobson in Gender Bias: Roadblock to Sustainable Development, 1992.

The lack of access to enough food - food insecurity - has been categorised by the World Bank into two types; chronic food insecurity and transitory lood insecurity. Chronic food insecurity is the state of a continuously inadequate diet caused by the inability to acguire food. Such a condition affects the household which

persistently is unable to produce or buy sufficient food. This form of food insecurity resulting in malnutrition is widespread and on the rise. Transitory food insecurity is a condition of a temporary decline in a household's access to enough food. It frequently results from instability in world food production, world food prices or the household's purchasing power. In its severest

form it is famine. Famine is often the result of natural disasters, wars, crop failures. Transitory food insecurity is globally isolated in occurrence but increasing. Nowhere is civil strife more rampant than in sub-Saharan Africa where it is a principal factor behind the critical food situation. Other factors include rapid population growth, political disarray and environmental degradation. Nicholas Alexandratos in a 1994 study on Agriculture Towards 2010', remarks that "even if civil strife were to stop tomorrow, it would take a long time to restart the economy and build the physical infrastructure and social institutions." The longterm impact of war, social and political upheavals only compound the hunger issue.

The North South Roundtable convened in November 1995 in South Africa to outline strategies for revitalising African economies and societies in the 21st century concluded that there is a fundamental shift in thinking required. A shift away from preoccupation with military and state security to a focus on human security and on ways to reduce human insecurity in such fundamental areas as access to food and water and personal safety against crime and violence. The Roundtable noted that according to latest figures available, \$8.6 billion were allocated to the military in Africa.

According to the Draft Policy Statement and Plan of Action for the November 1996 World Food Summit to be held at FAO headquarters in Rome, over the past thirty decades, world food production has grown faster than population with per capita food production today being about 18 per cent above that of 30 years ago. Food availabilities for direct human consumption are equivalent to some 2.700 kcal/day, up from

2300 kcal/day 30 years ago. At one extreme, Western Europe per capita food availabilities stand at some 3500 calories and in North America at some 3600 calories. At the other extreme, average per capita food availabilities are only

For the developing countries as a whole, average per capita food supplies are expected to reach 2730 calories in 2010 a substantial increase from 2520 in the period 1990-

The countries of Algeria. China, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, North and South Koreas, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia have all increased their per capita calorie availability by an impressive 40 per cent over he past thirty years reports a FAO study in 1994. Agriculture: Towards 2010'. .

Despite the considerable progress achieved in increasing per capita food supplies, more than 800 million people were undernourished in the early 1990s. The two regions with the highest prevalence of malnourishment are South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. While the number of malnourished people is forecasted to diminish in South Asia, bringing their share of total population close to the 12 per cent average of developing countries by the year 2010, the malnourished population in sub-Saharan Africa is projected to increase by more than 100 million to just under 300 mil-

The countries with the highest incidence of malnutrition, with a daily per capita intake range of 1700 to 2000 and falling, include Afghanistan. Angola, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Peru, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Zambia reports the 1994 FAO study. While there are significant

food security between individual countries in different regions, they share a number of common issues and problems. MANAGEMENT OF SCARCE RESOURCES: availability of

differences in resources for

land and surface and ground water are vital issues.

UNEVEN RESOURCE DIS-TRIBUTION AND LABOUR MI-GRATION: some countries are resource-endowed and others are labour-endowed and the resulting labour movement has repercussions on remittances. agricultural production and women's participation in the agricultural production and labour shortage in sendingcountries.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRO-TECTION FOR FOOD SECU-RITY: a rampant critical feature plaguing all regions is the serious degradation of natural resources as a result of soil. wind and water erosion, desertification, water logging and salinity.

MARKET LIBERALISATION the current process of marketoriented economic reform has in many countries broken away from the previous system of centralised and inward-oriented systems of macroeconomic management. Reduced subsidies and increased private sector retailing are common features which have affected negatively poor farmers and consumers and the vulnerable

population. FOOD INSECURITY AND **VULNERABLE GROUPS**: rural households and the urban poor are vulnerable populations and for many countries, these two groups together constitute the majority of the population. Targeted food subsidies, food stamps and targeted feeding programmes are to be favoured, a difficult task in the

current economic climate. DEPENDENCE ON FOOD IM-PORTS: commercial food imports account for a large percentage of critical foreign exchange expenditure. Almost all developing countries satisfy national food needs by importing food, of which the staple cereal, rice or wheat is a bulk

PROSPECTS FOR ENHANC-ING FOOD SECURITY THROUGH EXPANDED FOOD PRODUCTION: the emphasis is on increasing agricultural production through changes in cropping patterns, yield improvements, mechanisation and importantly, equipping women with the means to enhance food production. However, increased food

production will not ensure increased consumption without an increase in purchasing power. The inability to buy food is the critical factor in poverty. The gap between availability and accessibility has to be reduced in order for people to have food security. Today, many food needs can only be met by cash income and the lack of purchasing power is the downfall of human progress. As Mohamed Yunus, Managing Director of \* Grameen Bank has put it, "when you call somebody poor in our country, it means that the person is failing to make his or her claim, felt in the market." The inability to make a claim on the commercial market is a condition prevailing amongst millions of people worldwide.

A CONDITION ALSO KNOWN AS 'A CLIMATE OF POVERTY': Further-more, in this 'climate of poverty', it is no coincidence that worldwide rural areas of low-income food-deficit countries account for 3.2 billion people whose life-sustaining needs have not been met by development at the close of the 20th century. Development has not seen a reduction in poverty but frequently only created a facade of modernity behind which the masses continue to lead lives similar to before. The form of poverty may have changed for a few but the substance of poverty remains the same for many - a deprivation of basic needs and a denial of basic human rights.

The United Nations in addressing the vital global concerns of shelter and food by holding the last two international gatherings of the 20th century recognises that a sophisticated, increasingly affluent world currently coexists with a marginalised global underclass. Global security demands that the 'have nots' also prosper and share in the benefits of development.

Raana Haider is the author of Gender and Development published by the American University of Cairo Press.

## The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

#### Thursday 18th July (All programmes are in local time. We recommend programmes printed in bold. There may be changes in the pro-

#### BTV

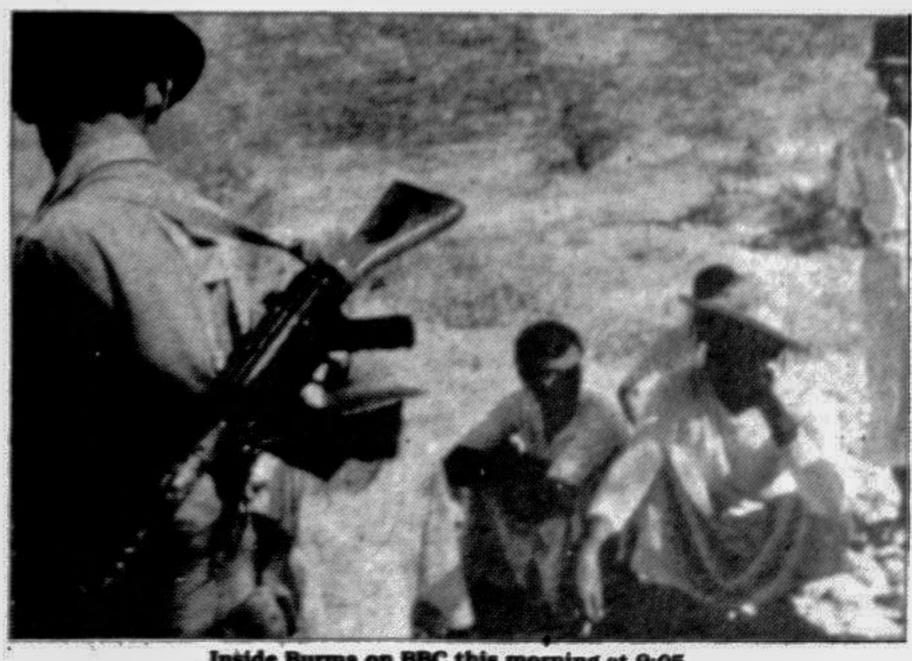
3:00 Opening Announcement A **Ouran Programme Summary 3:10** Recitation From the Geeta 3:15 Retelecast of selected programme from TV Archive 4:00 News in Bangla 4:15 Khelar Jagot 4:45 Cartoon Film: Tom And Jery 5:00 News in Bangla 5:25 National **Television School Debate 6:00** News in Bangla 6:30 Esho 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 Janmab humi 10:35 Film Show: The Equalizer 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Friday's-programme 11:40 Close down

#### BBC

6:00am BBC Newsroom inc. World Business Report/Asia Today/24 Hours 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 Inside Burma: Land Of Fear 10:00 BBC Newsday 1:00 BBC World Headlines 1:05 Under The Blue Flag 2:00 BBC World News 2:38 Time Out: Auction 3:00 BBC World News 3:30 Time Out: Top Gear 4:00 BBC Newsdesk 6:00 BBC World Imadines 6:05 Horizon 7:00 8BC **V. orld News 7:15 World Business** Report 7:30 BBC Newshour Asia and Pacific 8:30 Time Out ! Food and Drink 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 Inside Burma: Land Of Fear 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out: The Contenders 11:00 The World Today 1:00 BBC World Headlines 1:05 Correspondent 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Tomorrow's World 3:00 BBC World Report inc. World Business Report/24 Hours 5:00 BBC Warld News 5:19 Newsnight

# CHANNEL V

7:00am Rewind VJ Sophiya 8:00 Jump Start VJ Trey 9:00 Frame by Frame 12:00noon The Vibr VJ Luke 1:90 By Demand VJ Trey 2:00 Rewind VJ Sophiya 3:00 Big



Inside Burma on BBC this morning at 9:05

Bang VJ Alessandra 4:30 By Demand VJ Trey 5:30 Music Update Tokyo 6:00 Rewind VJ Sophiya 6:30 The Vibe VJ Luke 7:30 First Day First Show 8:00 Big Bang VJ Alessandra 9:08 Videocon Flashback 9:30 Classic Rock 10:30 First Day First Show 11:00 House of Noise VJ Luke

12:00 The Ride VJ Trey 1:00 Haysah 2:00 By Demand VJ Trey 3:00 Billboard US Countdown 5:30 Frame By Frame

STAR PLUS 6:30am Voltron 7:00 Teenage

Mutant Nina Turtles 7:30 Gl Joe

Sherrif 6:30 The Adventures Of Black Beauty 9:00 Aerobics Oz Style 9:30 Nanny and The Professor 10:00 Mr Belvedere 10:30 Burt Walf's Mensy 11:00 E! Features Twister 17:30 Gabrielle 12:30 Santa Barbara 1:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 2:00 The **Oprah Winfrey Show 3:00 Reming** 



Tara on Zee TV tonight at 12:00

\* Menus 4:30 El Features Twister 5:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 5:30 The Adventures Of Black Beauty 6:00pm Lost in Space 7:00 Home and Away 7:30 Char les in Charge 8:00 MASH 8:30 21 Jump Street 9:30 The X-File: 10:30 The Bold and The Beautify 11:00 Santa Barbara 12:00m The New Twillight Zone 12:36 Beverly Hills 90210 1:38 The Fail Guy 2:30 E! Features Twister 3:00 The Oprah Winfrey Shov 4:00 Hopperman 4:30 Home and Away 5:00 The Sullivans 5:30 Gabrielle

#### STAR Sports

6:08am The Bahamas 6:30 Aus tralian Football League Highlights 7:30 International Motorsports News 8:30 Cricket '96 Sunday League (AXA Equity & Law Sunday Leaguel Warwickshire vs Lancashire Event Date 16-7-96 Via Sky Sports 1:30 Atlanta Games 1996 Preview 2:30 High 5 III 3:00 World Wrestling Federation Mania 4:00 Live Cricket '96 Under 19 Youth One Day Int'l Series England vs New Zealand 1st One Day Int'l 7:30pm Lunch 10:00 Continued Live Cricket '96: Under 19 Youth One day Int'l England Series vs ! New Zealand 1st One Day Int' 11:30 High 5 III-12 12:00 Asia Sport Show-42 12:30mm Futbol 1:00 World Wresting Federation Mania 2:00 Interna-Motorsparts News 3:00 Boxing Juilius Francis vs Gary Delaney British Heavyweig Title 5:00 Thai Kickboxing High

### STAR MOVIES

7:30am Action: Stir (Arabic Sub) titles) 10:00 Family : Ferngully The Last Rainforest PG (Arabic Subtitles) 11:30 Family: Season Of Change (Hindi Subtitles) 1:30 The Dream Machine (Hindi Subtitles) 3:30 Adventure The Navigator: A Mediaeval Odys sey (Hindi Subtitles) 5:30 Classic The Grapes of Wrath PG (Him Subtitles) 7:38 Romance: The of Windsor (Hindi Subtities) 9:00 US Top Ten 9:30 Ro The Women Of Windso

(Hindi Subtitles) 11:00 2245 India Star Five 11:30 Private Eve Week: The Big Sleep (Arabic Subtitles) 1:30 Comedy: Mermaids (Arabic Subtitles) 3:36 Film Club: The Lonely Passion Of Judith Hearne (Arabic Subtitles: 5:30 Thriller Police Python 357 Arabic

#### ZEE TV 6:00 The News 6:30 Jagran 7:00

A to Z of Computer - the Man agement Course 8:30 Mere Ghar Ana Zindagi 9:00 Ghoomta Aaina 9:30" HFF 12:06 Commander 12:30 Rasna Spread Ek Minute 1:00 A to Z of Computer Chota Byte 1:30 Asian Sky Shop 2:30 Tara 3:00 Filmi Chakkar 3:30 Captain Cook Shahi Dawat 4:90 Film Deewane 4:30 Jaanbaz 5:00 A to Z of Computer 5:38 Himgiri

Safar 7:30 Gaane Anjaane 8:00 Rasna Kya Scene Hai 8:30 Gopal jee 9:00 Yeadool-Ae-Oo 9:30 Dastaan 10:00 Duniya 10:30 The News 11:00 Mano Ya Na Mano 11:30 Hum Paanch 12:00 Tara 12:30 Parampara 1:00 Asian Paints Yaadon Ke Rang 1:30 Filmi Chakkar 2:00 Celeste 3:30 Zee Arabia Infotainment - TMM

Ka Bir 6:00 Hum Honge Kaamyab

6:30 Ad Mad Show 7:00 Zaike Ka

#### PTV

8:00am Tilawat Aur Tarrumal Hamd/Nast 8:20 Cartoon 8:30 Khabrain 8:45 Cut Piece 9:28 Aahang & Roshni 9:45 Phopi Chandi 10:05 Sona Chandi | Orama Senal) 10:30 Buttons & Rustys iEng. Filmi 10:55 Milli Naghma 11:00 Khabrain 11:10 Aabshaar

Qawaali 12:55 Quran-e-Hakeem & Bismillah 1:15 Mugaddar (Brama Serial 2:00 Putihar (Drama Serial) 2:45 Perspective & Health Forum 3:40 Taleemi Maloomat 4:35 Aurat Aur Qanoon 5:05 Home Economics 5:25 Humaray Saath 5:55 Varna 6:25 Aiou Courses 7:05 Muqabil Hai Aaina 7:20 Amaik 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 Sanyo 11:15 Urdu Feature Film & Khas Khas Khabrini Close down

Music Programme) 11:55 Fele

Play (Drama Serial) 12:45pm

#### SONY ET

8:30am Yaadon Ki Baarat 9:00

The Three Stooges 9:30 Dennis The Menace 10:00 | Dream Of Jeannie 10:30 Ek Rang Lamhe Hazaar 11:00 Ghaav (Serial) 11:30 Cine Matinee-Hindi Feature Film 2:30pm Kismat (Serial) 3:00 Zamin Asman (Serial) 3:30 Mere Message Meri Geet 4:00 Surf Wheel of Fourtune (Game Show) 4:30 Faasle 5:00 O'Maria (Serial) 5:30 The Three Stooges 6:00 Dennis The Menace 6:30 | Dream of Jeannie 7:00 Mere Message Meri Geet 7:30 Premier 8:00 Surr Wheel Of Fourtune (Game Show)

8:30 Serial 9:30 Hospital 10:00 Aahat 10:30 Taak Jhaak 11:00 Dekh Tamasa Dekh 11:30 Yeh Sadi Nahi He Sakti (Serial) 12:00 Pehli Mulakat 12:30am Sunday Ki Sunday 1:00 Nirlop Rasoi Show 1:30 Jo Winner Wohi Sikander 2:00 Yeadon Ki Barat

#### ZEE CINEMA

EL TV

07:00 Music Time 8:00 Tarane

Aur Fasane 9:00 Best Of The

Best 10:00 Sargam 10:30 The

Music Show Real Countdown

11:00 Namaska 11:30 Shatrani

12:00 Spcial 3:00 Amar Prem

3:30 Zaika Ke Safar 4:00 Hit Hai

Hit Thi 4:30 Advance Booking

5:00 Yongbazz 05:30 Speical

7:30 Shidantra 8:00 Sath Sath

8:30 Public Dimand 9:30 Gambler

10:00 Navaras 10:30 Silsila

11:00 Special 12:00 Newshine

9:30 Jinda Dill 12:30 Shadi Ke Baad 3:45 Acha Bura 4:30 Goonda 10:00 Pather Ke Sanam 12:45 Malyalam Sayam Sanam 4:00 Bahi Behan

### TOM and JERRY

James Bond

**DRAWING BY HORAK** 

