



BOOKS

Vikram Seth returns with *Two Lives* P14



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— Agencies — STILL RELEVANT: A statue of Gandhi in Bangalore getting readied for his birth anniversary on Sunday.

SHORT TAKES

US tourist off to space station

A Soyuz rocket blasted off from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan early on Saturday, taking US space tourist Greg Olsen and fellow astronauts, a Russian and another American, off towards the International Space Station. P17

Infy, Wipro, ICICI in Forbes Fab 50

Three Indian firms — Infosys, Wipro, ICICI Bank — have made it to *Forbes'* first-ever Fabulous 50. P17

HT Health, P16

Now regularly with your Sunday HT

WEATHER

SUNDAY

Mainly clear sky. A sharp/sunny afternoon. A cool night. High 34°C, low 24°C. Max R.H. 84%. Detailed report on p4

Spykids and peeping parents

SUSHMITA Bose
New Delhi, October 1

RECENTLY, A colony in south Delhi was rocked by revelations that a 17-year-old girl had hired detectives for Rs 25,000 to tail her mother — who, she suspected, was having an extra-marital affair with a well-known public figure.

Then there is the case of a Class XII girl who hired detectives to spy on a man her parents were wanting her to marry. Reason? She wanted to prove to her parents that he was not worth the effort.

And it's not just about spykids. Increasingly, parents are turning to detectives to keep tabs on their children.

According to Sanjay Singh of Indian Detective Agency, the last two years have seen a spectacular rise in the number of cases where parents want their children tracked. "Out of 100 cases that we receive annually, there



JAYANTO

would be around 20 cases like this," he says, adding that his agency charges a minimum of Rs 10,000 for a basic weeklong investigation.

Mostly, these are parents who have an unhealthy interest in their children's love lives. "They want to know

things like who the kids are bringing home when they are away," Sharma says.

In one case, a couple from Lucknow wanted an agency to tail their daughter who had moved to Delhi two years ago. They suspected that she was "living in sin" with someone; worse, the man was not up to "their stature".

Sunena Duggal, vice president, BLS Detectives Ltd, says that, in many cases, parents even want the agency to counsel the children after they come up with their findings. "But usually we draw the line there — because it's none of our business," she says.

Dr Achal Bhagat, director, Saarthak, says this trend is due to a lack of communication between parents and children. "It is a changing society. If you cannot talk about difficult things with each other and then want to prove a point, then you hire detectives."

LENNON UNPLUGGED

From wife's counsel on dead Beatle