

# City plays host to 23 J&K children



■ Children from Jammu & Kashmir pose with army personnel in Kolkata on Wednesday —Shyamal Chakrovorty

## Our Correspondent

**Kolkata:** The city played host to 23 children from Jammu Kashmir who had been brought here by the Indian Army as part of 'Operation Sadbhavna' for an exposure programme. These children will be given a tour of eastern India to encourage them in continuing their education instead of becoming involved in anti-national activities.

For some children, it was their first visit outside their hometowns and their first train ride. "We are very excited to see the city. This is

the first time that we have come so far from our homes and we are looking forward to seeing the rest of the eastern region," said Tareef Shah, a resident of Rajouri district in Jammu and Kashmir.

The tour has been organised by the 7 Sikhli Tithwad Brigade which is posted on the border in Jammu and Kashmir. The children have been brought to the city on a three-day visit and will be given a tour of all famous and important landmarks of the city like the Indian Museum and Victoria Memorial Hall.

Along with visiting the

monuments, they will also be given a taste of malls, multiplexes and boat rides on the Hooghly. The children have not only been motivated to continue their education once they are back in their hometowns, some of them even want to join the army.

"After looking at the officers who have brought us here, even I want to join the army and serve the nation. If I am given some assistance, I can crack the entrance exam and get into army training colleges and institutions," said Rajesh Kumar, who was the only one to have studied in a

school among all the children.

After their stay in the city, the team will move on to visit Guwahati, Cherrapunji and other parts of eastern India. A different set of children from Jammu and Kashmir would again be taken to other cities for an exposure programme after this batch returns home. 'Operation Sadbhavna', which was started in the Ladakh region few years ago as part of the Indian Army's mass outreach programme, focuses on bringing development to people in 190 villages close to the 265-km Ladakh border close to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.