

## Biting the bullet, Prince Sil style



Kolkata-based magician Prince Sil with the bullet which he caught with his teeth in the city on Monday.  
Photo: S. Gopakumar

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It was infamously known as the magic trick that even the great Harry Houdini refrained from trying. It does not involve vanishing trains, circles of fire or nail-bitingly narrow escapes from underground or a water-filled tank while the magician is bound in a straitjacket. Just a single loaded rifle.

The 'Bullet Catch' is often described as the most dangerous illusions in magic lore and this trick was performed live at the Gandhi Park by Prince Sil who has earned the distinction of being the only Asian magician capable of 'catching the bullet'.

The tempo leading up to the performance was set by his daughter Roshini whose ominous introduction mentioned the deaths of 19 magicians who failed to defy the bullet.

Then he strode out on to the stage clad in a glittering purple cloak and silver boots. "It is real ammunition," he told the hushed audience, "Who wants to check," he asked, looking directly at Ministers K.C. Joseph and P.K. Kunhalikutty, who were present at the function. The two shifted uneasily in their seats but were emboldened to examine for themselves the weapon after IT Secretary P.H. Kurien went up to meet him. Mr. Kunhalikutty carefully held the weapon and, in jest, pointed the barrel directly at a group of alarmed photographers while the cartridge was studied and marked by Mr. Joseph.

For dramatic effect, the magician then signed a bond and handed it to the Ministers, saying he assumed complete responsibility should things go wrong.

The magician then replaced his sparkly turban for a helmet and placed a slab of glass in the line of fire. And then, the shot was fired disrupting the deathly silence that gripped the crowd. The glass shattered and the magician lay in a crumpled heap on the ground. Seconds later, he clambered onto his feet supported by his daughter and then waved for a microphone to amplify the 'clink' of the bullet landing on a metal plate from his teeth.

It was the same bullet marked by the Minister and loaded into the gun.

This performance was the befitting start arranged by magician Muthukad Gopinath during the inauguration of 'Magic Planet' – an infotainment centre at Kinfra Film and Video Park.