

Porno videos selling unabatedly

Hidden cam clips more popular among buyers

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

While passing Balaka Cinema at Nilkhet, people are often called by some pornographic video sellers who tempt them into buying the so-called "stash of goodies."

"Come and check out our collection. There are everything from foreign materials to even Bangladeshis," Matin, a VCD seller, called this correspondent at the spot. He claimed that he had a good collection of local hidden camera clips.

When asked, Matin showed some VCDs and DVDs, which were hidden underneath the pile of videos of Hindi and English movies at his makeshift shop on the footpath. He said most of these videos have been produced in Bangladesh.

Pornographic video clips made in Bangladesh are now being sold rampantly throughout the city.

Some pornographic video sellers said the making and selling of such videos have increased in recent time due to high demand. They said their customers are mostly young people, but there is huge demand among other segments

of the society as well.

"Most of them are regular customers. They demand brand new items and like to watch 'deshi' videos," said Abdul Kashem, a VCD seller at Gulistan.

He said a number of groups are active in the city to make pornographic videos mostly with the help of prostitutes. "Apart from these, there are some 'hidden-cam' videos which are sold at a higher price," he told this correspondent.

"Dozens of porno video clips filmed by hidden cameras are now available in the city," said Dawood Ahmed, a college student from Azimpur.

Ahmed admitted that he had watched three such videos out of curiosity.

Kashem said the 'hidden cameras' are installed at certain spots like bathrooms in the girls' hostels to film the bathing of girls. Some cameras are installed secretly in cyber cafes to film the intimate moments of couples who go there for dating.

Hridoy (not his real name), a 22-year-old pornographic video collector, told Star City that the high demand for hidden-cam clips are due to the realistic feel in these videos.

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"An added thrill is that some of the girls in these clips are allegedly from some reputed educational institutions in the city," he said adding that the sellers sometimes try to attract the customers by saying that the videos are filmed in those institutions.

Some sellers said they receive most of these videos from boys who develop relationships with innocent girls with the ulterior intention of making porno videos.

"They use these clips to blackmail these girls. If their demands are not met by the girls, then they sell the clips to

the market," said Moinuddin of Gulistan.

In most of these clips it is found that the victims were unaware of the camera location. The camera angles and video resolution prove that amateurs made these clips.

"These videos are being sold at most VCD stores in Nilkhet, Gulistan, Stadium Market and Eastern Plaza of the city," claimed Hridoy.

City dwellers allege that the police are doing very little to stop this illegal and unethical practices and bring the gangs to book.

"Due to inaction of police in

taking stringent measures, this business is going on unabated," said Maleka Rahman, a teacher and resident of Dhanmondi.

But police say these video sellers are rather elusive and it is very difficult to catch them. "They hide their items during our raids and restart the business as soon as we leave the spot," said officer-in-charge of New Market Police Station.

Some city dwellers however allege that the police themselves are getting a "share" of the profit from the porn video sellers.

The trend of making porno videos with hidden cameras began in 2001 when two perverts, Sumon and Pintu, released a number of such clips. Police were able to capture Pintu, but Sumon fled from the country, according to city dwellers.

The practice is still going on. The video sellers said dozens of 'deshi' videos are now available in the market. As many as 11 clips were released in 2005, they said.

The alarming rise in the hidden camera clips has created grave concern among the girls and their parents. "We are scared of these incidents and

always pray that this never happens to us," said Sumona Haq, a student of Dhaka University.

"It's a constant terror for me as I have a teenage daughter. As soon as I heard of these incidents, I began to accompany her to the school, coaching centres and even to her friend's house at times," said Kakoli Ahmed, a housewife.

Some parents hoped that the authorities concerned would investigate the matter and apprehend the criminals behind this crime.

"Unless the masterminds behind the clips are punished, the number of these clips will increase," said Farah Binte Hafiz, a student of a private university.

When asked, SM Mizanur Rahman, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said the matters are already being looked into. "The Detective Branch is currently looking into the matter. We are hopeful that we will soon apprehend the criminals."

LIVING IN DHAKA

From bad to worse

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

Life in the city with 12 million people has now become a nightmare as people are facing acute problems all at a time, said some residents.

The price hike of essentials, the scarcity of water, power, and low-pressure gas supply have trapped hundreds of thousands of city dwellers in untold miseries, in addition the menace of traffic congestion which has paralysed city life in recent times.

Essentials are now out of reach of low and middle-income people as prices from salt to baby food are increasing with every passing day adding to the rest of the worries the people have to go through.

Sugar that was Tk 36 six months back has shot up to Tk 58, and the authorities have not taken any action about the price hikes as yet.

"The media highlights our agitation, but nothing concrete



Traffic jam in the city continued to disrupt life despite two flyovers were built to reduce congestion.

has come out of it. Is the government really concerned about the people I wonder," said Romena Khatun, a housewife belonging to the lower-middle income.

Rice, flour, plus, edible oil, garlic, powdered milk, salt, tea are no more within the commoners purchasing capacity let alone chicken, fish, beef, and mutton.

Fish supply to the city markets is inadequate and the price is abnormally high.

Prices of various varieties of lentils, potato -- usually the food of the lower income group have also escalated so high that these people struggle hard to survive.

The biggest setback is the highest ever electricity crisis, which always created problems in Dhaka -- the so-called mega city, but now the situation is at its worst.

Against the current demand of 1,400 to 1,500 megawatts of electricity, the supply is only 750 to 1,000 megawatts resulting in

five to six or more hours of load shedding a day.

Examinees appearing in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations their first-ever public examination make preparations with the light of candles. In addition the shortage of electricity has brought along with it the shortage of water.

"After studying almost all night, we have no way of taking a shower," said Jahurul Haque, an examinee. "We neither have electricity nor do we have water," he added.

The Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) is blaming power cuts and low voltage of electricity for the water crisis as they pump out water from the 421 deep tube wells.

Apart from the water crisis, dwellers of the old part of the city are unable to use even the little water they get, as the water gives a bad smell.

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Film posters -- technology taking over hand painting

DURDANA GHIAS

Anil Das, 29, paints intently on the white polyester fabric in a dimly lit garage of Wari in the old part of Dhaka, working away on a poster of a Bangla movie -- 'All-rounder'.

His guide was a small photograph and using the graph enlargement method, outlined the faces on a 20x10 foot piece of fabric, where the face of the main actress in the centre overshadowed the rest. One side of the entire breadth of the cloth depicted an action scene while the other portrayed romance.

The garage is hot and humid but the heat did not stop Anil from continuing what he was doing, or while relating how he got into this job.

Anil had studied only up to

class 8 and entered the arena of painting watching his older brother Akhil who painted cinema posters -- hung at the front of cinema halls.

"I admired my brother's paintings and aspired to become an expert in portraits of cinema celebrities like he did," said Anil.

Anil said it took him three years to learn the art of painting pictures of such magnitude.

Cinema posters are drawn on polyester fabric of four sizes -- 20x10, 20x8, 15x10 and 12x8 feet. He charges Tk 190 for the large posters and Tk 96 for the smaller ones.

He does only the faces. Other artists specialise in painting clothes of the actresses and titles of the movie.

The fabric for his paintings is purchased from the Islampur market in old Dhaka, where he

spends around Tk 500 to Tk 900.

He keeps his paraphernalia in a small room inside the garage. The room is crammed with used and unused brushes and bottles of oil paints.

Anil and his peers use 10 shades of paint using red, blue, green, yellow, and violet as a base to bring out different shades. He blends burnish oil to dilute with the paint and purchases the colours from Nawabpur and Kaptanbazar.

There are 11 factories in old Dhaka that supply painted posters to cinema halls, with four or five people in each including a carpenter who makes the frame to hold the fabric containing the painting.

Anil gets orders from his 'mahajon' who takes orders from movie distributors, who

provide the printed movie advertisements. Artists are guided by the posters. Mahajon pays for the cloth and paint.

But things are not good these days. Technology has taken over manual labour. Dominance of digital posters has reduced their workload considerably.

"We are going through tough times as digital and printed posters have almost replaced the hand-painted ones, Anil said.

"There was a time when I painted 10 posters a week, but now it has dropped to three or four and sometimes none at all," said Anil, adding that even if he does get some work, he does not get the payment in time.

A few years ago distributors ordered 70 posters for a single movie but now there are hardly 60 for two.



Anil Das continues to paint film posters despite a bleak future.

"Two years ago I earned Tk 6,000 to 7,000 a month, but it has now shrunk to Tk 4,000," Anil said.

Yet Anil cannot think of any other profession.

"It took me three years to become a professional and worked hard for nine years. How could I change my profession to something I don't even know anything about? It isn't easy," he said, continuing to his painting, blending one colour with the other, with his bleak future at the back of his mind.

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"One of the reasons for power crisis is the ongoing development in the country"

-- Khaleda Zia
Prime Minister

Said at a public meeting in Rajshahi, on Wednesday.
Source: Prothom Alo

"I think the government already knows about our reservation about Jamaat. We can not sit with them to discuss reforms"

-- Saifuddin Ahmed Manik
General Secretary, Gono Forum

Said about the potentiality of Jamaat's inclusion in the government proposed committee to discuss reforms on caretaker government and election commission, on Friday.
Source: The Daily Star

"Every year, some 10,000 hectares of land disappear due to river erosion, rendering about 60,000 people homeless"

-- Jalaluddin Md Abdul Hye
Deputy Executive Director, Institute of Water Modelling

Said at a seminar on 'Water and Flood Management for Journalists' at the Press Institute of Bangladesh, on Tuesday.
Source: The Daily Star

"After the election, you will be shoved into a bottle by the Rab"

-- Obaidul Quader
Joint Secretary, Awami League

Said to BNP leader Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at a meeting of 14-party alliance, on Tuesday.
Source: Prothom Alo

"A lot of indigenous people were killed or critically injured in their fight against the Pakistani forces but we have failed to give honour or mention their names in our history of liberation war."

-- Mesbah Kamal
Associate Professor, Dhaka University

Said at a discussion on 'Contribution of indigenous people to the liberation war' organised jointly by Bangladesh Adivasi Odhikar Andolon and Research and Development Collective (RDC) at the National Press Club, on Friday.
Source: The Daily Star

"Initially Bangla Bhai did some good work in Rajshahi. Later he became a terrorist under the influence of Shaekh Abdur Rahman"

-- Hafez Moulana Abdus Samad
Leader, Islami Oikyo Jote in Rajshahi

Said at a party meeting in Rajshahi, on Saturday.
Source: Prothom Alo

"It's better to be a farmer than teach at college"

-- Abdullah Al Amin
Teacher, Meherpur Govt College

Said to reporters after being freed by police from the college storeroom where he along with other teachers were locked up for two hours by ruling party backed Chhatra Dal activists, on Saturday.
Source: Prothom Alo