

Shopping malls devoid of bookshops

DURDANA GHIAS

Amrin wandered around the top floor of a posh shopping mall Eastern Plaza. It was nice and cool inside as the central air conditioner was on, just in contrast to the heat beyond the building.

Her eyes were searching as she walked along.... She could not find them – there were none. The bookshops she saw just a year back were gone; and what stood instead were some electronics, mobile, CD and DVD shops.

As she enquired for the bookshops she was directed to 'Concept Mobiles' in place of 'Concept Books' and 'Ritzy Electronics' in place of 'Ritzy Books'.

Here lies the reality of what we see at the mushrooming shopping malls. The written word has been replaced by electronics CD and mobile phone shops instead of bookshops. Even the exiting ones are gradually closing down.

One reason behind this is the growing apathy among young and adults for reading. Children have lost interest in reading books, they would rather play video games or listen to a CD.

"This was a bookshop a year back," said Reza of Concept Electronics at the market, earlier Concept Books. He seemed enthusiastic showing new mobile

sets to his customers.

"Business is a lot better with this new electronic shop. The bookshop did not bring as much revenue and customers as I get now," he said.

Shop owners at the top floor of Eastern Plaza said that the floor had at least 10 bookshops, all of which have been transformed into CD, mobile or electronics shops.

"With the new electronic concepts, people were only crowding round CD and mobile shops and the bookshops seemed redundant," said one shop owner. "No one is interested in books anymore, even a child of 4 or 5 watches CD, but takes no interest in books. That's why I converted my bookshop to an electronics one," he added.

"The rents in a posh shopping mall like Eastern Plaza are very high. If we do not have a good flow of customers it is difficult to survive," he said.

The rent per shop on the top floor of Eastern Plaza is between Tk 40,000 to 50,000, the highest among all the floors, sources said. In addition there are also staff maintenance costs.

Rents were fixed according to the revenue of electronic shops. So the placing of the bookshops on the top floor was, in the first place a wrong decision, said some shop owners.

"We gave Tk 2 lakh to the shopping mall authority to

convert our shops into electronic outlets. I am not sure in which sector this money was utilised," said one owner requesting anonymity.

"Good Books' on the first floor of Rifles Square, in Dhanmondi owned by the University Press Limited (UPL) closed down two years ago. It contained imported books and publications of the UPL.

"The rent was too high for products like books and our profits were marginal," said Badiuddin Nazir, consulting editor and sales manager of UPL. "The effort was in vain," he added.

"Booklovers like spacious bookshops, and we had a 216 square feet. Just too small, but the rent was Tk 30,000, affordable only if sales reached Tk 3 lakh but that was virtually impossible," he further said.

Bookshops need highly skilled and knowledgeable manpower to handle sales; even a good university student may not have this knowledge if he does not read.

There is a go down cost for maintaining a bookshop. Every bookshop needs store space and the cost in shopping malls is far too high.

"Would the authority let us operate at lower rents? We need bookshop as food for thought but economy does not permit it," said Badiuddin.

"A reason why booklovers do

not haunt posh malls is because there are some markets specialised for books -- like New Market, Nikhet and Aziz Super Market. These are well known for books," said Mamun, a Dhaka University (DU) student.

A rent of a small shop at Aziz Super Market costs only Tk 4,000 to 6,000 and the spacious ones between Tk 10,000 to 12,000 a month. The shop rents in New Market is Tk 1,425 only. These rents are lower and affordable to bookshop owners.

"Bookshops of Aziz Super Market import books. If I go there I will find an array of new books which are not available in the bookshops of shopping malls," said Fairuz, another DU student.

"My father had two bookshops in the stadium market but the number of the customers decreased when electronics crept in," said Nipa Khaleed, owner of Ideas, a creative boutique in Aziz Super Market.

"The shops were there from 1960 to 1995 but gradually my father moved to this market. At that time many famous personalities like Mamtazuddin Ahmed and Asaduzzaman Noor visited his shops and gathered there in the evenings," said Nipa.

"My father imported books and the shops were always bustling with customers," she said.

"The reading habit is dying and this is one reason the glittering malls do not contain bookshops," said Nipa regretfully.



The view of a crowded posh shopping mall sans bookshops, in the city.

Unauthorized diagnostic centres, clinics and labs

IMRUL HASAN

More than 1,000 diagnostic centres, private clinics and laboratories in the city are into booming businesses with no approval from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), because of the lack of sufficient control of the authority concerned.

Officials themselves blame the DGHS for not exercising enough control over these unauthorised diagnostic centres, clinics and laboratories.

"Although rules stipulate regular visits by directorate officials to check whether diagnostic centres have necessary manpower, equipment and devices, no such inspection has taken place in years," said a high official of DGHS (Hospitals & Clinics) seeking anonymity.

Statistics reveal that up to March 31 this year 898 such institutions have been registered under the DGHS. Of these, 549 are diagnostic centres, while 349 are clinics, but the total number of such medical facilities is believed to be more than 2,000.

"The numbers are increasing rapidly. After March 31, eight to 10 more labs and diagnostic centres opened for business without our approval," said the same official.

Dr. Md. Aminul Islam, director, DGHS (Hospitals & Clinics) denied the allegation. "As a continuous process we alert defaulting institutions through the print and electronic media to obtain licences as soon as possible," he said.

"We order the black listed diagnostic centres and clinics to overcome their weakness and problems. If they don't follow our order, we cancel their

On April 6 this year, a mobile court conducted a drive in at Millenium Diagnostic Centre in Green Road in the city. The court led by magistrate Tapan Kumar Biswas found the atmosphere unhygienic and unskilled technicians in the X-ray room.

licence or seal the centre with the assistance of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC)," Islam said.

He further added that they have no scope to charge any clinic on the spot. They could, he said send them notice with a 15 day grace period asking them to upgrade their equipment. In some cases they even get together in a one to three months.

"Letters have been sent to

the Division Directors and civil surgeons asking them to prepare lists of all authorised and unauthorised diagnostic centres and clinics at district and upazila levels and send them to us within a month," he said.

On April 6 this year, a mobile court conducted a drive in at Millenium Diagnostic Centre in Green Road in the city. The court led by magistrate Tapan

Kumar Biswas found the atmosphere unhygienic and unskilled technicians in the X-ray room.

However, a high official of the Centre denied the allegation and said: "Take a look around the environment and talk to our technicians. You will see that our X-ray room is fully equipped and the technicians are well qualified."

Another court found that

patients were given expired medicines and saline at Millenium Heart and General Hospital at Lalmatia under the Mohammadpur police station.

Doctors do not visit the diagnostic centres frequently although business is soaring. In the same area Life Line Urology Centre performs sub-standard kidney operations.

A court led by magistrate AKM Tariqul Alam found expired drugs and faulty medical equipment and arrested five employees, including Dr. Khairur Razzaq and matron Salma Khanam of the Centre.

When contacted, Tariqul Alam said: "There were no adequate facilities for any examination. Vegetables, such as brinjals (egg plant) were found in the refrigerator where medicines were stored."

Asked about the atmosphere of the clinic, Alam

said: "We detected some drugs that expired in 2002 were being sold at the pharmacy. Certain drugs from government hospitals, that were not supposed to be there, were available."

When asked about the use of expired medicines, a senior officer of the hospital preferring anonymity said that patients are well aware of expiry dates. They check the date printed on the pack before buying it.

"How could we possibly deceive them?" he asked. "We appreciate the mobile team's effort to curb malpractices, but such allegations will deprive us of our patients," he said.

These fake diagnostic centres and private clinics, especially at Fakirapul, Arambagh, Chankharpul, Shyamoli, adjoining areas of Midford Hospital, do not have any DGHS registration, while inexperienced doctors and

unskilled nurses provide treatment to patients, city dwellers alleged.

"I fell prey to this fraud last month... Seeing big signboard and the names of physicians, I went to a diagnostic centre at Fakirapul for a urine test prescribed by my doctor," said Rashidul Islam a victim of this fraudulence.

"Expressing his doubt over the test result, my doctor asked me to do it again in another centre, where I got a different result," he said.

"This should be stopped ... no one has the right to play with a sensitive issue like another person's health," Islam said angrily. "The authorities should take stern action against such frauds," he added.

TV GUIDE

News Bulletin

BTV
News Headlines (Bangla) at 8:55 am, 12:10 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 7:00 pm.
News (Bangla) at 8:00 am 1:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm.
News (English) at 3:00 pm, 10:00 pm.
Late Night News (Bangla and English) 11:30 pm.

CHANNEL-i
News (Bangla) at 7:15 am, 9:00am, 2:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 10:30pm, 12:15am.
Telecass of BTV news (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

ATN BANGLA
News (Bangla) at 7:00 am, 10:00am, 2:00 pm, 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11pm.
News (English) 8:20am, 7:00pm.
Telecass of BTV News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

CHANNEL-i
Latest News (Bangla) at 9:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00pm, 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

ntv
News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00 am, 12:00 am, 6:15 pm, 9:30 pm.
News (Bangla) 7:30 am, 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 7:30 pm, 10:30 pm.
Telecass of BTV News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

TARA BANGLA
News Headlines (Bangla) at 5:30 pm, 7:30 pm, 9:30 pm.
Tara News (Bangla) at 8:30 pm, 11:30 pm.
Tara News Bangladesh (Bangla) at 9:30 pm.

BBC WORLD
Every hour on the hour

ntv

09:25 Shaswato Jibon
09:35 Open University
10:00 Satellite Programme
12:15 Songbad Potrer Pata Thake

12:30 Shastho Totto
01:00 Lal Golap
02:15 Educational Programme
02:40 Lekhapora
03:05 Childrens Programme
03:30 Nrether Tale Tale S
04:00 Dolon Chapa
04:30 Protashar Alo
05:05 National TV Debate
06:10 Children's Programme
ON Tagore Birth Anniversary
06:35 Programme On Red Crescent Day.
07:00 Special Programme On Tagore Birth Anniversary
07:30 Bongshi Bajay Ke
08:40 Special Drama
10:25 Teknaf Theke Tetulia

CHANNEL-i

09:50 Tithiyomatra
11:05 Poem Reciting Show
11:30 Aj Amader Chhuti
12:05 Gitanjali
12:30 Citycell Taroka Kathan
01:05 Kora Alap
02:40 Documentary Film
04:05 Citycell Shorashori
05:30 Rabindranath
06:20 Special Programme
07:50 Special Drama: Ek Ratri
09:35 Solo Musical Soiree by Rezwana

Chowdhury Bannya
Odhora Madhuri

ntv

09:30 Poem Reciting Show
10:00 Grammen Phone Shironam
10:05 Shama
11:30 Kotha Bairey Dure
01:05 Muktagon
02:35 Drama Serial: Ramizer Aaina
03:15 Rabindranather Bangladesh
03:50 Dhakay
04:25 Rabindharanath
05:20 Tomader Pulo
06:20 Shubho Shondhya
07:20 Tele Quiz
08:25 Drama serial: Labonya Probha
09:10 Special Drama: Malanchhya
11:25 Dindarpan

ATN BANGLA

10:30 Annodrishti
11:15 Tobo Porosh Madhuri
12:05 Special Programme On Birth Anniversary Of Rabindranath
12:40 Tagore Barir
01:30 Hiar Majhe
02:40 Tele Film: Shompotti
04:45 Akash Bhora Surjo
05:45 Drishyo Kabbo
06:20 Special Programme on Rabindra Birth Anniversary
08:00 Special Drama:

Rtv

09:00 Human nature
10:00 Aj Potrekay
10:30 Chhoder
11:00 Rabindranath
12:05 Briddhasram
Pathe
01:00 Agantuk
02:00 Aj Potrekay
03:30 Islami Programme
04:10 Tagore Song
04:30 Musical Programme
05:05 Kalo Mregoya

CHANNEL 1

08:40 Shuprobhat
10:00 Cartoon
10:30 Bangla Film
10:30 Padma Raag
03:30 Drama: Nosto
04:00 Drama Serial: Society
05:05 Kalo Mregoya

04:30 Concert
05:30 Music Show
06:00 Rabir Gaan
07:00 Sesh Belar Gaan
08:15 Special Drama: Boshtumi
09:30 Rabindranather Teen Konya

11:15 Rome 12: Kalends of February
12:15 The Bourne Supremacy
02:30 Gotham
04:30 Donnie Darko

STAR MOVIES

10:35 Iron Eagle 2
12:40 Master And Commander: The Far Side Of The World
03:20 The Others
05:25 Smokey And The Bandit Iii
07:15 Arachnophobia
09:30 Miracle

STAR WORLD

07:30 Seinfeld
08:00 Hollywood Squares

08:30 Whose Line Is It Anyway?
09:00 The Drew Carey Show
09:30 The Oprah Winfrey Show
10:30 The Apprentice
11:30 Senior Prom
12:30 Lost
01:30 Desperate Housewives
02:30 Oprah Winfrey Show
03:30 The Bold And The Beautiful
04:30 General Hospital
05:30 Angel
06:25 Sports Update
06:30 The Simpsons
07:00 The King Of Queens
07:30 Friends Sr 8
08:00 Seinfeld
08:30 My Wife And Kids
09:00 Still Standing
09:30 Yes Dear
10:00 Frasier
10:30 My Big Fat Obnoxious Fian
11:25 Sports Update
11:30 Seinfeld

DISCOVERY

08:30 Nigel Marven Week
09:30 Discovery's Biggest Shows
11:30 Impossible Heists
12:30 Power Women
01:30 Wild Discovery
02:30 Detective Stories
03:30 Mystery Hunters
04:00 Physical Science In Action
04:30 Nigel Marven Week
05:30 Mythbusters
06:30 Extreme Machines
07:30 Wild Discovery
08:30 Days That Shook The World
09:30 Seven Wonders Of The

Industrial World

10:30 Greatest Ever
11:30 FBI Files

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

08:00 Telebrands
08:30 Nat Geo Junior
09:30 Wildlife Diary
10:00 Nat Geo Junior
10:30 Nat Geo Investigates
11:30 Hard Grain
12:00 Rough Trades
12:30 Go Wild With Hutch
01:30 Chasing Time With Hutch
02:30 Nat Geo Investigates
03:30 The Living Edens
04:30 Nat Geo Junior
05:30 Wildlife Diary
06:00 Nat Geo Junior
07:30 Storm Stories
08:30 Hunter Hunted
09:30 Free To Roam With Hutch
10:30 Air Crash Investigation
11:30 Built for the Kill

STAR SPORTS

08:30 Bull Riding
09:30 Race Day
10:30 Formula One
12:00 Chequered Flag
12:30 English Premier Football League
02:30 Spanish Football League
04:30 Bull Riding
05:30 Football Extra
06:00 Cricket Classics
06:30 Prid Fc Archives
08:30 Ecb International Cricket
10:00 Fifa World Cup Preview
10:30 Sportscenter India
10:32 Bull Riding
11:30 Sportscenter India
11:32 Formula One


ESPN

07:30 Kiana's Flex Appeal
08:00 Kardio Knockout
08:30 Asian X-Games
Qualifiers
09:00 New Zealand Tour Of South Africa
10:30 Nba Anthology
11:30 Winter X-Games
12:00 New Zealand Tour Of South Africa
01:28 New Zealand Tour Of South Africa
03:30 Ice Cricket World
04:00 New Zealand Tour Of South Africa
08:30 Sportscenter
09:00 Sportscenter
09:30 Classic Boxing
10:30 Sportscenter
11:00 Sportscenter
11:30 Fifa World Cup Programming


TEN SPORTS

08:00 Gillette World Sport
09:00 WWE:Heat
10:30 Total Rugby
11:30 West Indies v Zimbabwe-4th ODI, Highlights
12:00 Chevrolet Cricket Show
12:30 Gillette World Cup Football Preview
01:00 Total Rugby
01:30 Legends
02:30 WWE:Heat
03:30 Barca TV
05:30 WWE: Raw
08:00 The XFLYS Show: Ep 4
10:00 West Indies v Zimbabwe-4th ODI, Highlights
11:00 Italian League Highlights
12:00 WWE: Raw

PICK OF THE DAY



Ek Ratri
On Channel-i at 7:50 pm
Single episode drama
Cast: Jeetu Ahana, Kusum Shikdar



Kotha Baire
On ntv at 11:30 am
Solo musical soiree
Artist: Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya