

# The dying film industry

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Insufficient funds, outdated technology, pirated CDs, inadequate cinema halls, bad publicity and falling talent are responsible for the state of Bangladesh's deteriorating film industry.

"The equipment used here are those that have been rejected in film industries elsewhere," said Abu Sayeed Khan, an executive member of the Film Directors Association (FDA) and a member of the Bangladesh Film Producers and Distributors Association (BFPDA) who entered the industry in 1981 as a script writer and then turned actor, director and producer.

The digital equipment and colour labs used in film industries in other countries project clear pictures and soundtracks but the results of the equipment in the Bangladeshi film industry, purchased several years back are most unappealing to viewers, said Sayeed.

He also said that the equipment of Chinese and German origin have to be constantly repaired for reuse.

After completing the shooting of a film that takes at least 20-22 days, in two shifts, the exposed film is then taken to the colour labs for washing, followed by processing, dubbing and editing for distribution to cinema halls.

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Though a cinema is supposed to be shown at cinema halls after release, pirated CDs takes precedence leaving few viewers at the halls and financial losses to film distributors.

"Piracy is a form of robbery," said FI Manik, a director of many hit films and executive member of the FDA who entered the film industry in 1974 as an assistant director. He alleged that an unscrupulous section of people in the cinema halls are responsible for the piracy.

He also said that many cinema halls in the country have been shut down and turned into shopping malls and apartments.

Although the film industry falls under the purview of the information ministry, govern-

ment assistance is inadequate and no banks provide loans to produce films, and the ministry has no separate section to deal with film related issues.

"I spend around Tk 50 million on a single film but I can earn Tk 30 million only in case the film becomes a hit," said Ustad Jahangir Alam, acting president of BFPDA.

Although private corporations sponsor TV and stage dramas, no one is willing to sponsor a commercial film as they are more expensive and not so popular.

"We do not have the finance to modernise our equipment nor a film academy to train would-be actors for commercial films," said Md Hussain, senior vice-

president of BFPDA.

"Talented directors, producers and actors of the past have either deceased or left the film industry," said Manik.

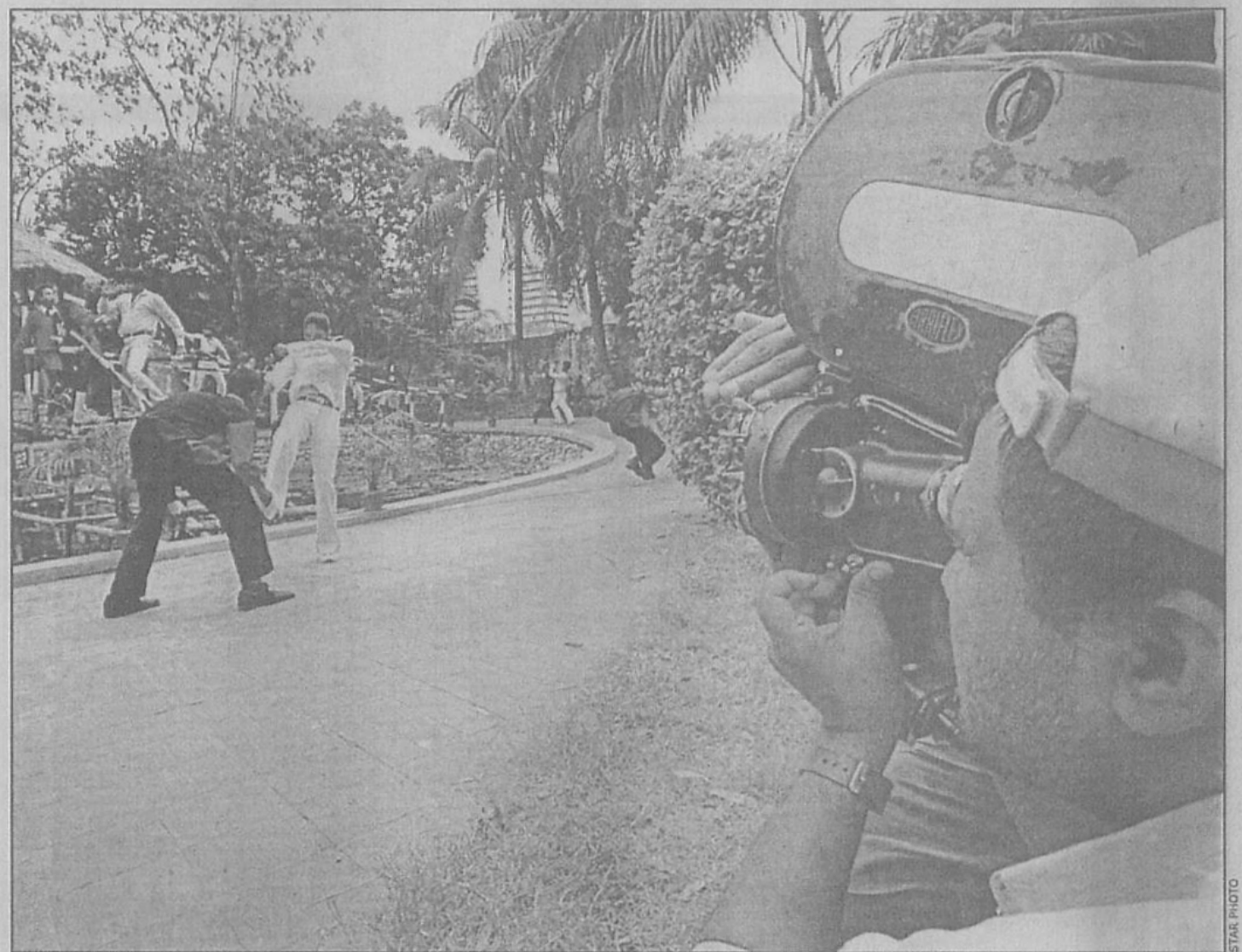
Many would-be talented actors are not willing to enter the film industry because of the bad reputation of the film industry, he added.

Responding to a question about transferring talented stage actors to the film industry, Mizu Ahmed, a former actor and currently the president of the Cine Artiste Association said there was a big difference between stage and film acting.

"Formal training for films is required and it includes consciousness of physical fitness, which is lacking in most Bangladeshi actors," he said.

Responding to allegations of vulgarity in Bangladeshi films, almost everyone in the industry focused on cable TV, exaggerated cinema posters, bad publicity and a section of unscrupulous producers and so-called actors.

"A certain section of film directors do produce pornographic films but this is decreasing as penalties now exist for producing such films," said Manik. He could not specify the exact rate of penalty but added that the recently introduced censorship laws are to benefit the film industry.



Shooting of an action movie in progress at Bangladesh Film Development Corporation at Tejgaon.

"Many viewers enter the halls on seeing the vulgarity depicted on the cinema posters and ultimately end up vandalising the halls when they realise that such scenes do not actually exist in the films," said Ahmed.

He added that the present technology could expose a fully dressed woman and pornographic films made through

mobile phones.

"Those who act in pornographic films are not genuine actors," he said.

He said that most people would not find it vulgar to see a scantily dressed slim figured foreign actor whereas they would find it vulgar to see an obese Bangladeshi actor dressed in the same way.

"No one is making any fuss about scantily dressed female football fans in the ongoing World Cup that are being published in the newspapers," he said.

When contacted, officials at the information ministry, declined to comment.

"Had there been adequate talent among the producers,

directors and actors then perhaps good quality films would have been made regardless of limited finance and poor technology which could have drawn the attention of viewers and sponsors," said a disillusioned assistant director who joined the industry in the late 90s and is now contemplating leaving it.

# Protecting rights of migrant workers

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The government is yet to ratify the UN Convention to protect the rights of the migrant workers fearing the country might lose the job market if it ratifies the convention.

However, experts and labour bodies say ratification of the convention could be helpful for a huge number of Bangladeshi workers living abroad.

"It is a lame excuse as Sri Lanka and the Philippines have been able to capture the job market in the Middle East in spite of ratifying the convention signed in 1998 to protect the rights of the migrant workers," she said.

She said the Law Commission responded positively in ratifying six conventions including the UN convention on protection of the rights of all the migrant workers and members of their families. Bangladesh government signed it in 1997.

Tasneem Siddiqui, also chairperson of South Asian Migration Resource Network, said it is a



Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training provide necessary information to the migrant workers.

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matter of regret that in spite of being a major labour sending country, Bangladesh has not signed the convention, which is in favour of the labourers.

"Ratification of the convention is a must as it will provide the rights of information and health of the migrant workers and reduce exploitation and abuse," said Saiful Islam, chairman of Welfare Association of Repatriated Bangladeshi Employees.

"It is very unfortunate that there is no budgetary allocation for the support service for those who have been sending remittance of over \$4 billion a year," he said.

"There is no objections from the ministries or recruiting agencies against the ratification of the convention, yet there is no progress in ratification," he said.

Around 2.50 lakh people went abroad in 2005 as migrant workers and the number is 92,000 in the first three months of this year, says a report of expatriates' welfare ministry. The amount of

remittance sent by the workers was 4.2 billion in 2005.

"Manpower export has increased as the government is now providing training to the workers before they go abroad. Country's image, remittance facilitation, briefing and quick money transfer are playing favourable role," said Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Mohammad Quamrul Islam.

Stressing the need for ratification of the convention, a high official of the ministry said the convention would provide a legal coverage to the workers living abroad. The expatriates' welfare ministry has a positive view in this regard. "But the issue of ratification is completely under the foreign ministry," he observed.

Contacted, an assistant secretary of the foreign ministry said the convention came into force in 2003 and many countries have already activated it. "There are various international conventions and a few of those lie in the

Prime Minister's Office and a few in the ministry for lack of inputs from other ministries concerned."

Ratification of the convention is essential especially for the migration of women workers, as it would provide safe migration and the receiving countries would be responsible for any abuse or injustice towards the workers, said Programme Coordinator of Bangladesh Oviabashi Mahila Sramik Association Sumaya Islam.

She said a total of 31,433 women went abroad for job between 1997 and 2005.

Bangladesh should explore the international job market utilising its unskilled and semi-skilled manpower and should develop market research tools as the government considers it as a trust sector, said Tasneem Siddiqui.

"Both the Awami League and BNP government had enough time to ratify the convention, but they did not take any initiative and it is our demand to the next interim government to ratify the convention," she said.

## healthouting, taxicab & train timing

### HEALTH

- Hospitals**
- Anjuman-e-Mofidul Islam 9336611, 7411660
  - BARDEM 8616641-50
  - Cholera Hospital (ICDDR) 8811751-60
  - CMH (Dhaka) 9870011
  - Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital 8628612-6
  - Holy Family Red Crescent 8311721-5
  - Islamia Eye Hospital 9119315, 8112156
  - Lion Eye Hospital 9129127
  - Medinova Medical Services 8620353-4
  - Mirpur General Hospital (Pvt) Ltd 9007873, 8015444
  - Milford Hospital 7319002-6
  - National Heart Foundation Hospital 8014914, 8010491, 8021399
  - Orthopedic Hospital 9112150

- Salimullah Medical College Hospital 7319002-6
  - Samorita Hospital 9131901
  - Shahid Suhrawardi Hospital 9122560-78, 9112086, 8114856, 9130800
  - Shishu Hospital 8116061-2, 9119119
- Clinics**
- Akand Clinic 8015855, 8022581
  - Aroggaya Niketan 9333730
  - BAV.S Maternity 8016413-4
  - Dhaka Monorog Clinic 9005050
  - Gulshan Mother & Child Clinic 8822738, 8812992
  - Ibn Sina Clinic 8119513
  - Jahanara Clinic (Pvt) Ltd 8912929
  - Judi Maternity 9113322
  - Paltan Poly Clinic 9557385
  - Retina Eye Center (Clinic) 9884588, 9884566
  - Shishu Bekash Clinic 9351625

- The Eye Clinic 9333238
- Blood Bank**
- Red Crescent Centre- 9116563
  - Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040
  - Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7310061, 7319022
  - Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9
- Eye Bank**
- Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040
- Ambulances For**
- Dead Body**
- Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail) 9336611, Gandaria 7319808, 7318166,
  - Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

### MARKET CLOSED

- Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday
- Elephant Road-Friday
- Bishal Center-Friday
- Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday
- Polwell Market-Friday
- BCS Computer City-Friday
- Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday
- Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday
- Stadium Market-Friday
- Bangabazar Market-Friday
- National Museum-Thursday
- Ahsan Manzil-Thursday
- New Market-Tuesday
- Gausia Market-Tuesday
- Mouchak Market-Sunday
- Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
- Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
- Eastern Plaza-Sunday
- Farmview Super Market-Sunday
- Mukitjuddha Jadughar-Sunday
- Dhaka Zoo-Sunday
- Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

### TAXI CAB

- Passenger's Complain**
- 01711-000990, 01711-000991, 01711-000992, DMP-999, 2627.
- Cab Salida Ltd.** 9344477, 01711-620888, 01711-610405
- Cosmo Cab Ltd.** 9112959, 8127191, Nitol Cab Co. Ltd. 8125285, 01711-621953
- JBS Cab Ltd.** 0191-364575
- Coal Cab Ltd** 8130485, 01711-826731
- Llimujin Cab Ltd.** 9318351, 9337204
- Multi-Cab Ltd.** 9666502, 9570740
- Nihon Taxi Cab Ltd.** 8624742,
- 8624741
- Orion Taxi Cab Ltd.** 934727, 9347277, 01711-155144
- Reliance Cab Ltd.** 9339563-4
- RMS Cab Ltd.** 8118536
- Shatarupa Taxi Cab Ltd.** 731083, 01711-458740
- Tinni Cab Ltd.** 9662009, 01711-645257
- Teletax Cab Ltd.** 7202201
- Alif Cab Co. Ltd.** 0191-357838, 83116948
- Cab One Ltd.** 9563054 Ext.-3077, 3178
- United Cab Ltd.** 7510166, 01711-
- 348474
- Ulka Express Ltd.** 9359885, 01711-313554
- Cab Bangla Ltd.** 9563077 Ext.-3054, 3178, 01711-622644
- Cab i Ltd.** 9563054, 9563077, 01711-629585
- Cab line Ltd.** 8321162
- Capital Cab Co. Ltd.** 9352847-9
- Classic Cab Ltd.** 200825, 01711-233851, 01711-812415
- Comport Cab Ltd.** 8817610-4
- Cab Express Ltd.** 9341369, 9339337, 9348401 Ext.-111

### TRAIN TIMING

- Subarna Express** Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm
- Mahanagar Prabhati** Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am
- Mahanagar Godhuli** Leaves Dhaka at 3:15 pm
- Turna** Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm
- Parabat Express** Leaves Dhaka at 6:40 am
- Joyantika Express** Leaves Dhaka at 12:45 pm
- Upaban Express** Leaves Dhaka at 9:45 pm
- Tista Express** Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am
- Ekata Express** Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm
- Upakul Express** Leaves Dhaka at 8:00 pm
- Agni Beena Express** Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm
- Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm
- Reaches Chittagong at 1:55 pm
- Reaches Chittagong at 10:55 pm
- Reaches Chittagong at 6:40 am
- Reaches Sylhet at 2:30 pm
- Reaches Sylhet at 9:20 pm
- Reaches Sylhet at 6:40 am
- Reaches Bahadurabad at 1:05 pm
- Reaches Bahadurabad at 11:15
- Reaches Noakhali at 5:00 am
- Reaches Jagannath at 2:30 pm

### LIBRARY & INFO

- Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers**
- Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
  - Shishu Academy- 9564128
  - Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
  - Bangla Academy- 8619550
  - Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
  - Nazrul Institute- 9114602
  - Ford Foundation- 8116133
  - Alliance Francaise- 8611557
  - Information Resource Center, The American Center - 8813440-4, 9886395-9
  - British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
  - Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
  - Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
  - Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141-2
  - The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
  - Drk Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412
  - Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) 9330081-4