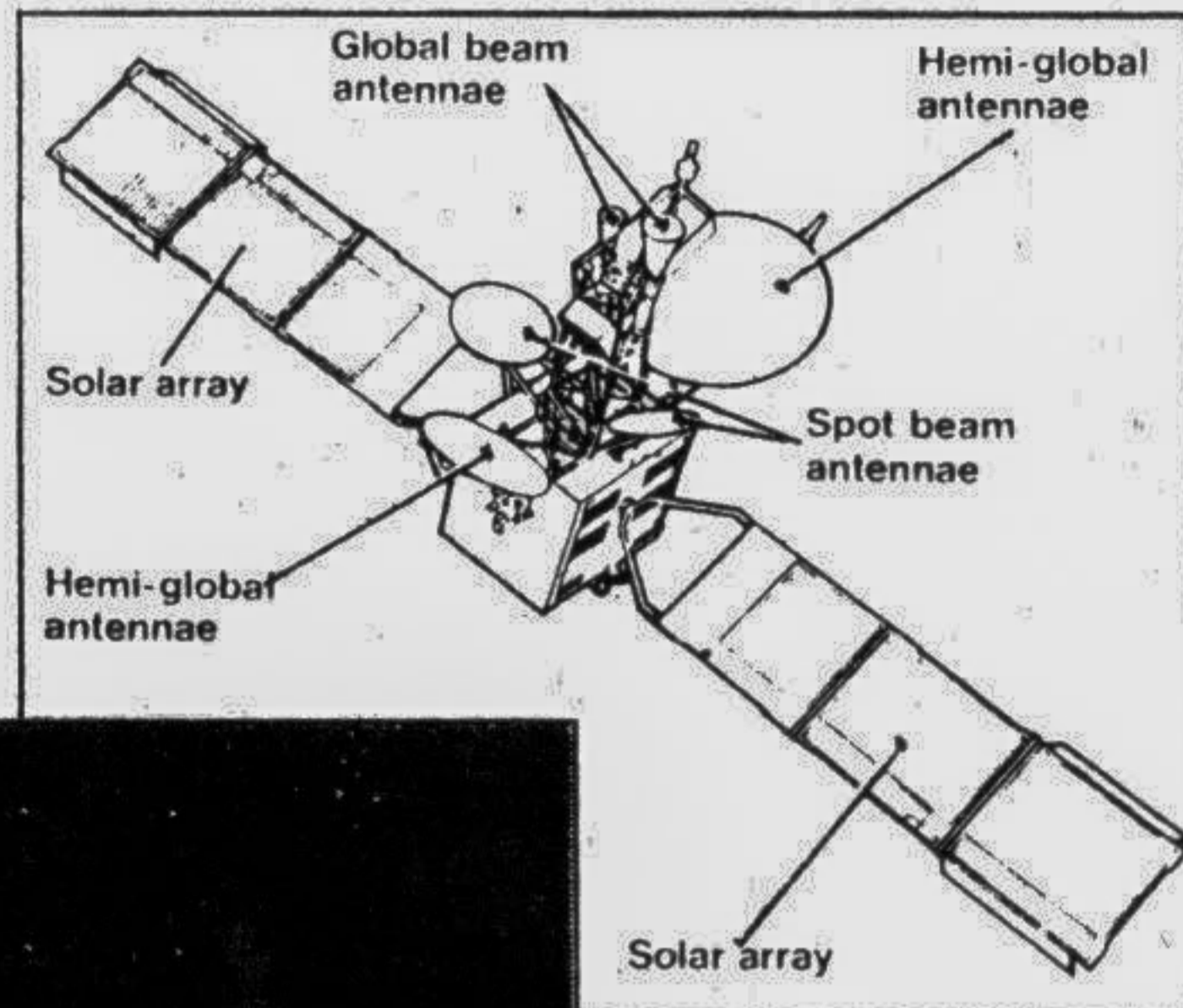


Satellite Broadcasting over Asia Impacts are being Felt

by Syed Lutfi Ali



society is the focal part of any social reforms and reactions. The upper and affluent class of the society is least bothered about any social reaction in the country. Most of them always tend to lead life in a western style which keeps them aloof from our cultural heritage. At present these people belong to the privileged class of satellite programming choice. Many of them have taken the satellite system as a decor in their drawing room to show up their wealth and ability and they watch it as a gesture of vanity of their taste. Therefore their general viewers of BTV are confined to the national channel which is programming its own and that of CNN at a particular time. Although they may be considered as serious viewers but they are deprived of foreign programming choices. In general, it may be said that CNN programming is giving a broader impact in the field of

THE satellite communication has caused a significant impact on the broadcasting media landscapes of the world, particularly in South-Asia region. With the continual thrust of satellites in the orbit, the system of communication got its breakthrough from region to region and continent to continent. This electronic media has democratised our entertainments worldwide and freed the ON THE AIR services of the international broadcasters to the individuals of the world.

The satellite services has got some significant advantages over the terrestrial networks. For example, an entire country can be covered from the first day of the satellite service, whereas the construction of the terrestrial transmitters may take many years. Moreover, the reason for the dominance of satellite services is that the direct-to-home television is more cost effective because of universal coverage. Also, the satellites are transparent to both analog and digital signals. That is why, from US to India and Japan to Indonesia, satellite broadcasting is emerging fast. In view of the pivotal role of the satellite communication in the modern world, it is high time to make a broad-based review on the effects of satellite broadcasting in south Asia region.

First of all let us focus on the reactions of some Asian countries other than Bangladesh.

In Japan, about eight million households subscribe to NHK's Broadcast Satellite (BS). Moreover, in Oct 1992, a communication satellite has been launched by MTV of USA as a musical channel in Japan. In spite of this international broadcast invasion, the Japanese terrestrial TV stations are not much worried about the threat of satellite competition. According to Japanese network experts, they are not expecting any negative impact in the next few years. The main cause behind this confidence is that they have developed strong capability to offer their own better programmes to their viewers.

In Hong Kong, the arrival of satellite TV caused some mixed reactions among the terrestrial broadcasters. According to Hong Kong government owned channels, the arrival of Star TV caused minimal impact on the audience figures and advertising revenue. However, the private channel owners of Hong Kong are more concerned about the future, especially if Star TV started broadcasting in Cantonese on three of its free-to-air channels. In view of this apprehension, the Hong Kong Govt. decided to impose license for satellite receiver. Pay TV etc. and will explore new avenues to help the private channels.

In Indonesia, TV broadcasting started over 30 years ago and now 95% broadcast coverage of the nation is being done by its own satellite 'Palapa'. The Indonesian broadcasting policy and its effect on the public are considered in the context of national development. In the past 28 years of BTV services, very few pivotal changes took place in the broadcasting landscape of Bangladesh excepting some organizational changes. Years together most of our viewers are confined in a single channel transmission. And though BTV authority does not want to admit it but it is true that a large chunk of its viewers are bored with its programmes.

With the debut of some neighbouring TV channels the viewers of our bordering belt were able to pick up the TV signals other than BTV broadcasting. The viewers of those area were investing in boosters and high power antennas for receiving DDI programmes and now it has become a common practice in the countryside. Thus the foreign programme fascination has already started in our country. This reaction hastened the process of official consideration of our nationwide broadcasting network. The national objectives of this expansion are to bring about economic emancipation and gradual changes in the life style of the teeming millions through raising production, mass literacy, per capita income, intensifying efforts at the future planning and people's participation in the uplift programmes. The launching of more satellites such as ASIASAT, ARABSAT in the orbit, has opened more widely the door of receiving foreign broadcasting. The year 1992 will be remembered as a significant year in the broadcasting landscape of Bangladesh. It was in this year that the government legalised the satellite dishes to the viewers and brought CNN programmes to the viewers

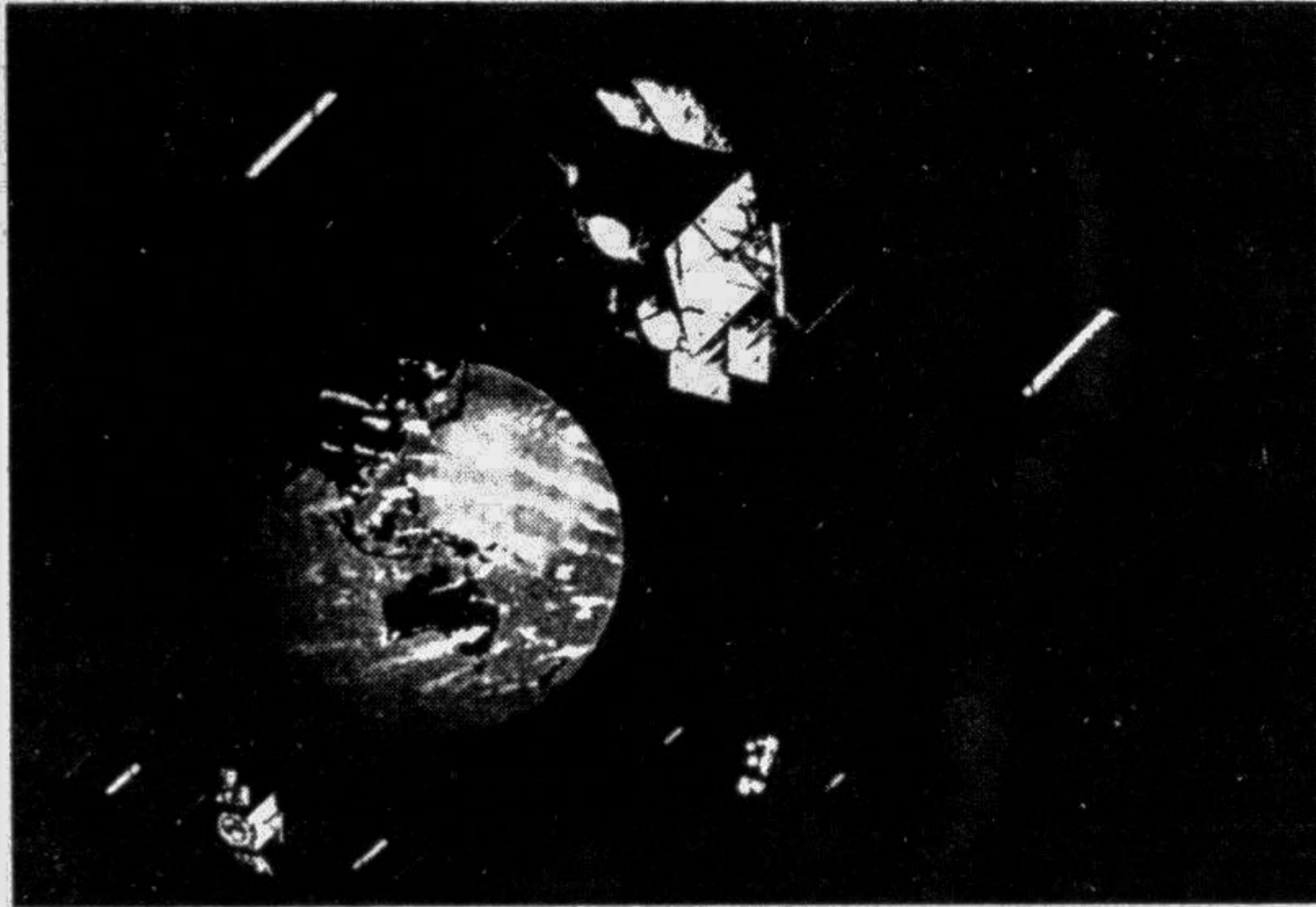
free of cost by rebroadcasting if in the national network. Getting green signal from the government, the vendors of TVRO and dish antenna have sprung throughout the country with a fierce competition. As a result, satellite dishes have begun popping up on the rooftops in the affluent area of Dhaka and other divisional cities of the country.

grammers and cable operators, because the audience is being diverted to these trends. But the Indian officials don't feel threatened, because they believe that advertisers will not be able to pay the foreign networks in local currency. They also claim that advertisers today are more interested in rural market as their urban market is already saturated.

In Pakistan owning of dish antenna is open to all. Moreover, a number of cable operators in Pakistan and Middle East are making que for transponders from Asia Sat. South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand don't allow individuals to own satellite dishes and in Malaysia and Singapore only state owned institutions are allowed to instal dishes but they are considering to allow cable operators and Pay TV.

Although the availability of foreign channels has provided our TV viewers with programme choices, but it is difficult to assess its impact at this moment. Compared to other south Asian neighbours, the practice of satellite receiving

is very much in a preliminary stage in our country now. The choice of foreign channels is confined to the affluent elites which is a negligible part of the total population. Over three hundred TVROs and dishes are there in the country now and of which 10% belongs to the government and autonomous institutions. Amongst the privileged group who have got an 8' dia dish, can tune six channels of Star TV, Pakistan TV, Burma TV etc. If anybody can afford a 12' dia dish, he can also tune CNN



Bangladesh entered the satellite communication network via the INTELSAT quite a long time ago. The first live TV coverage (of challenge bout of Mohammad Ali Clay) was made in 1975 by point-to-point international connection through satellite communication. The programme after being received by our Betubunia earth station was fed to BTV transmitter and thus for the first time the people of Bangladesh experienced the viewing of international programme live. In a small but populous country like ours, this satellite broadcasting system has given a tremendous reach of disseminating audio-visual information to the people. If we review the past of our broadcasting, we can see that, since its liberation in 1971, Bangladesh inherited some significant lead at least in one area — the 'TV Broadcasting', which most of its neighbouring countries could not think of at that time. Our broadcasting goals, content and its effects on our viewers are considered in the context of our national politics and socio-economic development. In the past 28 years of BTV services, very few pivotal changes took place in the broadcasting landscape of Bangladesh excepting some organizational changes. Years together most of our viewers are confined in a single channel transmission. And though BTV authority does not want to admit it but it is true that a large chunk of its viewers are bored with its programmes.

With the debut of some neighbouring TV channels the viewers of our bordering belt were able to pick up the TV signals other than BTV broadcasting. The viewers of those area were investing in boosters and high power antennas for receiving DDI programmes and now it has become a common practice in the countryside. Thus the foreign programme fascination has already started in our country. This reaction hastened the process of official consideration of our nationwide broadcasting network. The national objectives of this expansion are to bring about economic emancipation and gradual changes in the life style of the teeming millions through raising production, mass literacy, per capita income, intensifying efforts at the future planning and people's participation in the uplift programmes. The launching of more satellites such as ASIASAT, ARABSAT in the orbit, has opened more widely the door of receiving foreign broadcasting. The year 1992 will be remembered as a significant year in the broadcasting landscape of Bangladesh. It was in this year that the government legalised the satellite dishes to the viewers and brought CNN programmes to the viewers

France. And just across the channel from the south-east coast of England lies this historic port. The centre was part-funded by the EEC with a grant to cover 40 per cent of the costs coming from the European Fund for Economic and Regional Development. Nearly 6,00,000 people have enjoyed Nausicaa's unique approach to marine discovery since it opened its doors to the public. It is the closest most opportunity people will ever get to actually exploring underwater. Nausicaa was on target to net a bumper catch of three/four million visitors in its first year and was successful to attract 1,50,000 British visitors alone in 1992. More than just a huge aquarium Nausicaa's 3,000-plus fish range from 2.5 metre sharks to ferocious conger

programmes. A recent survey report reveals that only 7% of total TV audience are viewing CNN for a short period (before 8 am everyday) and among this 7 per cent, 90 per cent are male viewers.

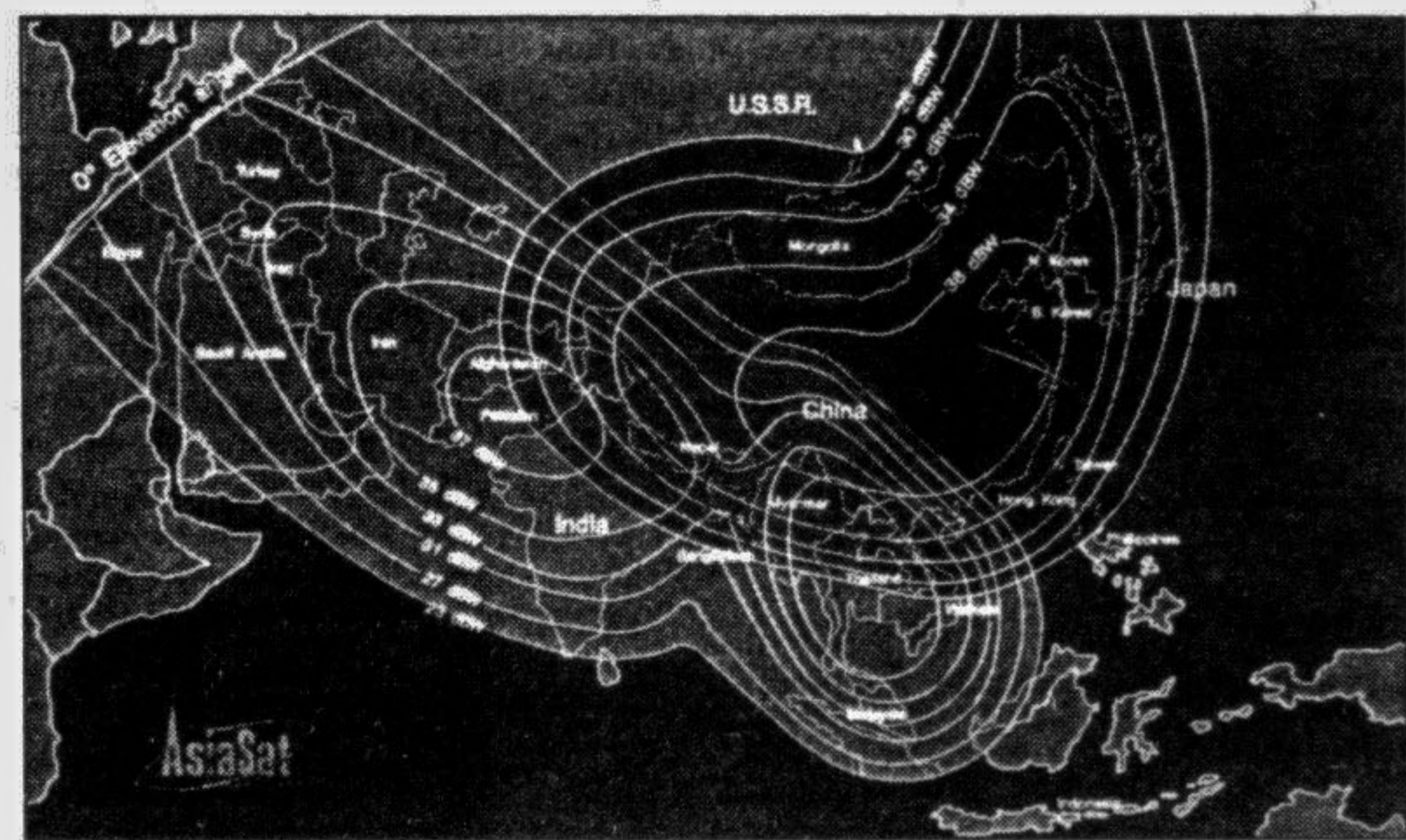
Moreover, the Star TV's Hindi channel for the Asian people has made the purchase of satellite receiving system may not be considered to be serious viewers and no reaction or impact of foreign broadcasting can be expected from this affluent group.

On the other hand, the

worthy. It may be reiterated that most of the satellite programming now being offered to South Asia is free. Star TV is trying to spread its signals toward this region, while CNN is already in trial run of its international programming in this region.

It has been experienced that the middle class of our newscasting. With this transmission, the outside world has come nearer to our viewers in a palatable form. The viewers are enjoying it with keen interest and they have already developed a taste for making comparison between CNN news and BTV news. Now we can feel that our newscasting is vulnerable because it is more

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AsiaSat 1: Its Northern and Southern footprints cover a wide area.

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media communication, we may improve our technology and at the same time we may explore our programming market in the outside world. The thing BTV must do at this moment is to improve their quality within their existing framework and try to promote the programme exporting. It is a positive sign that BTV already started exporting its popular serials and musical programmes to UK. And some cable operators of London are trying to reach contract with BTV for their programmes, but due to logistic constraints BTV cannot satisfy the burgeoning needs of the foreign market. Not only the UK market, there are other potential export market for Bangladesh TV programmes in Middle East, USA etc. where Bangladeshi communities are clustered.

If development goes on properly, Bangladesh can become a net exporter of entertainment programmes to foreign markets. The government should increase BTV's technical and logistic facilities and implement the system of incentives to the quality programme makers for the foreign market. Now most of the Asian countries have developed some private channels to complement their government channels. Our government too should take this vow. It has been agreed by everybody that BTV's programmes are saturated to their planning and ideas. So, a competitive environment is highly needed in this situation. To ensure competition in programme production, the government may consider legalising private production houses, private channels, cable operators etc. If an emerging creative talent base stands ready to give fresh ideas, certainly we can give quality production for home and abroad.

There is no doubt that the Satellite TV war is well in its way as various networks vie for transponders to beam across this subcontinent. It has come to us just when our programming choices started. So, it will be unfair to assess the impact of international broadcasting or to react on its effects at this moment. We should wait for the reactions and complement our broadcasting arena with enlightened satellite action thus to be exposed to the world's sophisticated cultures.

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NAUSICAA — the Ocean has Landed!

by Sadaf Noori

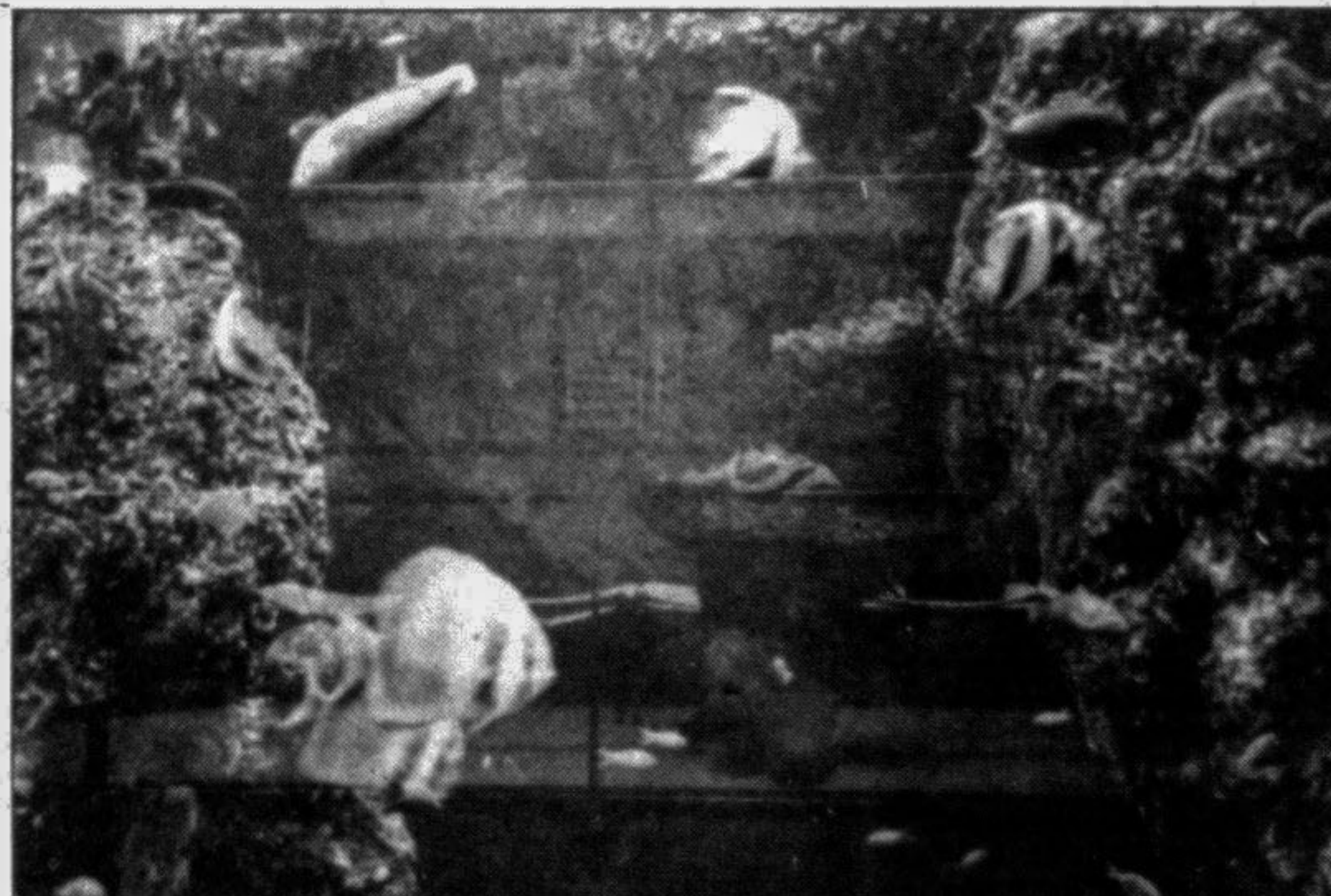


Experience has no certain boundaries; as much as you will get into its depth, you will come out with unique experience of explosive feelings... So is 'Nausicaa', only one place on earth where from you can make an exciting journey to the depths of the ocean.

A faint blue light penetrates through the dark in the passage leading to the cathedral which echoes with the song of whales. You're leaving the earth surface and beginning your descent! Nausicaa takes you on a voyage of discovery, an expedition, a wonderful journey to sea — to learn about and understand the sea itself. Here one tends to discover another world and penetrate the secrets of marine life.

Nausicaa, the world's largest sea centre, is also Europe's only marine discovery complex for the general public, the fishing industry, marine professionals, researchers and scientists. Completed at a cost of £16 million in May 1991, it is located on the seaford in the heart of Boulogne, northern

France. And just across the channel from the south-east coast of England lies this historic port. The centre was part-funded by the EEC with a grant to cover 40 per cent of the costs coming from the European Fund for Economic and Regional Development. Nearly 6,00,000 people have enjoyed Nausicaa's unique approach to marine discovery since it opened its doors to the public. It is the closest most opportunity people will ever get to actually exploring underwater. Nausicaa was on target to net a bumper catch of three/four million visitors in its first year and was successful to attract 1,50,000 British visitors alone in 1992. More than just a huge aquarium Nausicaa's 3,000-plus fish range from 2.5 metre sharks to ferocious conger



Planktons are illustrated on an immense curved wall.

And above all by its art of technology, within a moment, visitors are plunged into much more darkness as they enter the 'exhibition' and, automatically, it has transported them into an underwater world to interact with the fish!

The first stage of the underwater journey begins with a look at the first element in the marine food chain — plankton — which is illustrated on an immense curved wall.

Clever special effects give eyeball to eyeball contact with crabs and lobsters through glass bubbles; humans are caught in a net with a shoal of tuna; eerie ocean depths are explored as if from a submarine and the heat and humidity of a tropical lagoon is recreated. And before the awe-inspiring experience of watching 16 sharks swimming only inches away, visitors can try out touch tanks — especially popular with children — where friendly skates enjoy having their tummies tickled.

The next approach is video screens, set in a sea of columns of light, which explain some of the ways fish live and avoid danger, while surrounding aquariums illustrate the various techniques used against predator fish which can camouflage themselves and the 'shoaling' effect, for example.

After that, the visitors go right down to the ocean depths — as if by a submarine — to dark, inhospitable places — where some marine life exists, thanks to hot water springs. Large potholes give the sensational feeling of actually being there!

In complete contrast, a tropical lagoon with colourful fish, corals, heat and humidity comes next via an airlock. More than 1,000 fish, in all colours of the rainbow, swim in a 100; metre tank displaying some of the abundant species to be found in warm water.

Then on to 'the Mediterranean' — where the effects of pollution are graphically shown in illuminated tanks and where, by standing in a glass bubble, visitors can

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