

# DOWN TO EARTH

## The Lure of Video Culture

By A S M Nurunnabi

The medium of video has opened up a new horizon in entertainment and education. This has not, however, been an unmixed blessing. Certain aspects of it have emerged which are looked upon with censure and disfavour in the context of our ethics and morals.

The video culture has been spreading at a fast pace. So much so that nearly all the big and small towns of Bangladesh including even village bazaars boast of a mushroom growth of video cassette shops. They are said to do a booming business. It is even felt in some quarters that its widespread reach exercises a somewhat adverse impact on the cinema industry.

A video shop's stock in trade normally consists of several varieties of films, viz., action, thriller, comedies, social, science fiction, cartoon, etc. They are mainly available in the city in three languages, Bangla, English and Hindi. The Bangla films are by far the most popular, although their availability is limited as compared with Hindi films.

Not more than a decade ago, the craze for viewing foreign Hindi and Bangla films rose to such an extent that in attempts to ensure better TV reception from neighbouring country, all kinds of aids were used. Thanks to the current video culture

which ensures easy availability of foreign films, even the latest ones, much of that craze has subsided.

Most of the films that are available in the city's video shops relate to entertainment. Educative films are hard to come by there. A good store house of educative films is the British Council Video library where a wide range of educative films on various subjects are available to the members.

In the burgeoning video culture, the attractive aspect is its entertainment value. Gone are the days when you had to plough through the hustle and bustle of a cinema house to view a film. Now in the comforts of your home you can enjoy any video film of your choice. The main problem however relates to the prevailing preponderance of the elements of sex and violence on video screen. It is felt that such preponderance is assuming the proportions of a new wave of erosives of socio-juvenile morals which is a cause for concern. Most of the video films which prove popular with the young generation draw upon sex and violence as the chief source of entertainment.

The modern deluge of these two elements in video has resulted in youth being soaked by them as never before.

The spectacle of these ele-

ments and other felonies presented in extravagant colours in the video affects the imagination of the young viewers to such an extent that they tend to emulate in real life their screen heroes and heroines. Along with this, pornography does not very much fall behind.

It is apprehended that from the newly acquired habit and from impression's made on the young mind over a long period, violence may turn into a socio-criminal syndrome, as it has already become in some western countries.

For Bangladesh the problem at present may not be as acute as in the western societies. Here people in general have long held to a tradition of decency in matters of sex and social mores and of a sense of revulsion of feelings against violent crimes. But there should not be any complacency in this behalf.

The regrettable fact is that we find no evidence of any control over this medium in any form.

According to sober sections of our people, the prevailing vicious circle of terror and distorted culture in video films should be broken and care taken to create a healthy atmosphere of entertainment and education.

With the video films drawing expanding multitude of viewers, their sociological impact can well be imagined.



Aftermath of torrential rain in the city for the last three days.

—Star photo

## CPB MPs may join

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MP, is expected to call on the AL high command to express his desire to join the party, sources close to him said.

When contacted, Nazir Hossain and Dabirul Islam confirmed their respective plans. However, Mozahar was not available for comment.

All these five MPs, elected on the CPB ticket and with the AL's election symbol—the boat—joined the reformists led by Saifuddin Manik when the CPB split into two factions in May this year. But following the reformist group's merger with the CP last week, the party MPs are now in a dilemma. The opponents of the merger, including these three MPs are yet to decide on their party stance. They are expected to meet soon to discuss the matter.

"Reformation of the CPB was aimed at creating an ideal communist party on the basis of its past glory and socialist ideology but abolition of the party is regrettable", one source told this correspondent.

Talking to The Daily Star, Nazir Hossain admitted that he was keen to join the ruling party and said he had initiated talks with the BNP leaders in this regard.

"I met the Speaker to know if there is any legal bar against the switch-over", he said.

Ruling out the possibility of preserving the CPB (reformist) segment, Nazir said: "I think, under the current polarisation, the two big parties—the BNP and the AL—should be strengthened. I prefer the BNP, since I find this party's aims and objectives more suitable to address the current needs of the country", he said.

"BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia's leadership is dynamic,

pragmatic and she has a positive attitude towards national politics", he added.

Begum Zia is leading the nation towards development and production, he said, adding, he wished to cooperate with her.

On the other hand, Nazir blamed the AL for its failure to work out a timely course of action along with its allies.

On Dr Kamal's move, he commented that there was no room for any third trend in national politics.

Nazir informed this correspondent that Mozahar Hossain, who shared the same views, was also willing to join the BNP.

Dabirul Islam told The Star last night the AL was his first choice for, as he put it, it was the single biggest party in the pro-Liberation camp.

"I am planning to join the AL unless there is any legal bar", he said, adding: "I was elected MP twice with the AL's election symbol. I am indebted to this party."

However, Islam said he will discuss the issue with the other MPs of the erstwhile CPB (reformists).

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## Water-logging

From Page 1 Col 5

with water from the man-made lake and pond.

But because it was a weekly holiday, vehicular traffic was generally thin and most people preferred to stay at home.

The roads of Rajarbagh, Shantinagar, the Ramna Park Crossing, Eskaton, Elephant Road, Kamalapur, Maghbazar, Plassey, Mirpur Section 10, Gopibagh, Tuktuk, Gandaia, Postgola, Nemtoly, Seddique Bazar and Aloo Bazar and other areas had gone under one to two feet water yesterday afternoon.

According to the Met Office showers may continue for another day.

As a result of heavy fall across the country, the temperature was relatively lower yesterday. In the city the highest temperature was 25.9 degrees Celsius and the lowest 24.2 degrees. The country's highest—30.5 degrees—was recorded simultaneously in Teknaf, Dinajpur and Cox's Bazar and the lowest—22.0 degrees—was recorded in Faridpur.

Rainfall recorded during the day time yesterday were: Faridpur 77mm, Jessor 38, Chuadanga 36, Rajshahi 22, Patuakhali 20, Sitakunda 18, Feni 16 and Chandpur 10mm.

The Met Office forecast that the sky will remain cloudy over the country during the next 24 hours commencing at 6 am today.

During this time, occasional moderate rain or showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind may continue at most places over Chittagong, Dhaka and Rajshahi Divisions and at many places over Barisal and Khulna Divisions.

## Sartaj Aziz

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pressed the hope that both the caretaker government and the army would maintain neutrality in the polls.

He said the PML, for the first time in 23 years, was fighting the coming polls alone. Earlier it took part in the elections in 1985, '88 and '90 as a constituent of an alliance.

He said he was happy to see that the democratic process was taking root in Bangladesh and investment opportunities appeared through the adoption of liberal economic policies.

Sartaj Aziz said the situation in Bangladesh was very positive both politically and economically.

He said he was looking forward to more meaningful cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh in different fields. He said the present trade between the two countries, which stood at 130 million dollars both ways, could be increased further for the mutual benefit.

Relying to a question on the sharing of assets and liabilities, the former Pak finance minister said the issue was raised during Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to Pakistan and a joint committee was set up to look into it. He said if the PML were voted to power the committee would be activated.

On the question of repatriation of stranded Pakistanis from Bangladesh, Aziz said Nawaz Sharif's government had earlier taken some 3000 families back to Pakistan. He said Sharif's government would resume the process if voted to power.

He described his visit to Bangladesh as very useful and meaningful.

## Arafat

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Nations Works and Relief Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees in Ail Helwe.

After today's Muslim prayers they took to the streets and branded Arafat a "traitor" and a "spy" and rejected the accord.

Members from the Palestinian groups Jamaa Islamiyya and the Islamic Jihad-Beit al-Maqdis took part in the protests which were also attended by members of 10 Palestinian groups, including hardline PLO factions.

In Borj Esh-Shemali, near the southern port of Tyre, another 2,000 demonstrators took to the streets shouting "the traitors have sold out Palestine".

In Jordan's Baqaa refugee camp, protesters set fire to Israeli and US flags, accused Arafat of being a traitor and warned him that the "people are against you" correspondents said.

The Baqaa protest was organised by Jordan's powerful Muslim brotherhood and attended by supporters of the Islamic resistance movement, Hamas.

In Paris, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Friday that an accord between Israelis and Palestinians could be a catalyst for other talks, including with Syria, and predicted that complete peace was within reach.

"We are very near to complete peace", Peres said after a three-hour meeting with President Francois Mitterrand at the latter's country home in southwest France.

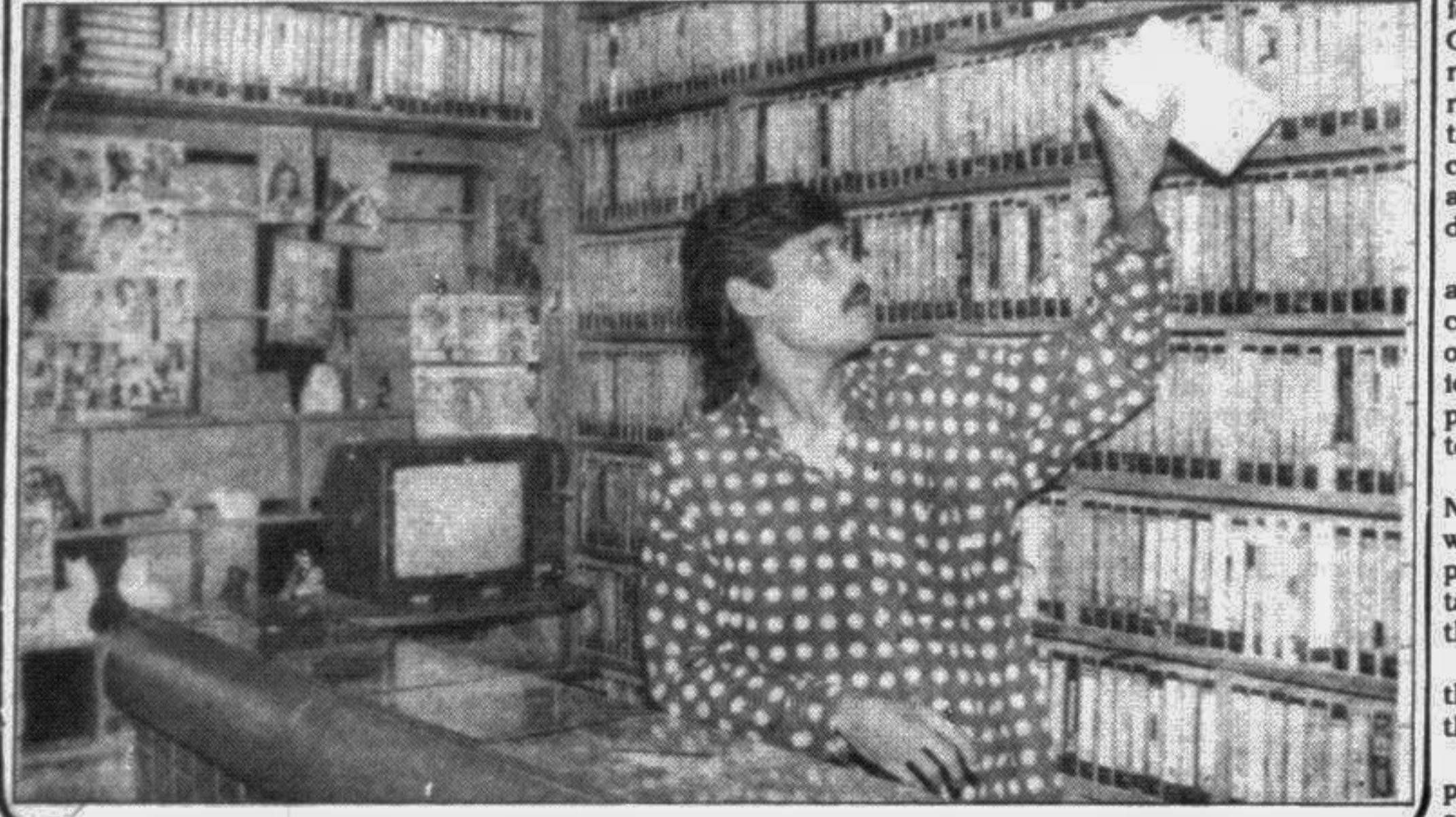
"It is the only way out for the Arabs, for us and for the world. I am convinced we will reach it", Peres said. The peace between us and the PLO must be transformed into peace for the entire region.

Meanwhile, the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali offered today to send peacekeeping troops to the Gaza Strip and Jericho following an Israeli withdrawal foreseen in a draft peace rule agreement.

The United Nations is at the disposal of Israel and the Palestinians if they need an international or a UN presence in Gaza or Jericho, he told reporters after meeting French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe.

Russia today welcomed a draft peace accord aimed at ending 45 years of bloodshed in the middle east and said it might send Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev to visit the region.

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## Methane gas project

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in the proposed Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge.

Presently and in the near future, there is no other energy resource available in western zone other than coal. The government has taken steps for coal extraction from Barapukuria which will produce one million tons of coal per year.

Eighty per cent of the extracted coal from Barapukuria will be used for producing electricity and the rest 20 per cent for other uses. This is insignificant to the actual energy requirement for the western part of the country, experts said.

The water level of the western zone is very low and getting lower every year due to the Farakka barrage in India. Earlier, shallow tubewells and hand tubewells were used for agricultural purpose in this region. But in near future, only deep tubewells will be used requiring high energy due to lower level of water.

Experts pointed out that will be rapid increase of demand for energy with more industrialisation and growth of agriculture.

Most parts of the country, specially the western and northern parts, are experiencing a fast desertification process due to the wanton felling of trees for domestic and commercial uses as main sources of energy. To stop the process alternative source of energy like methane gas extraction is needed.

USA and the countries in Europe/Africa and Latin America are using coal-bed methane extensively. In the USA alone, coal-bed methane reserve is about 400 TCF.

The methane gas will be used for power plants, industrial plants and also for household uses. Extraction of methane gas will greatly reduce mining hazard and at the same time keep the quantity of coal unchanged.

Though the country is trying to attract private companies in exploration ventures, it may not yield the desired result unless the government can pay world prices for any contractual priorities to cover indigenous demand, according to an international expert.

Such agreements are more likely for crude oil than for natural gas. Consequently, private

sector funds may not be forthcoming to sustain the country's gas production.

The expert suggested to undertake a rigorous review of the existing gas fields, both producing and underdeveloped, in order to generate a strategic plan ensuring maximum gas recovery and as a consequence, an optimum utilisation of the capital investment projects already constructed or agreed.

It is an urgent need to redirect international attention, effort and investment away from gas utilisation projects and into medium to long-term supply issues.

Under the current scenario, new gas pipelines, NGL facilities, Turbo-expander plants and the like could have less than 10 years operation life at maximum capacity before production difficulties affect the supply, the expert said.

**Khaleda asks**

From Page 1 Col 4

be co-opted in the Juba Dal.

During her 35-minute speech, the Prime Minister said the central leaders should not always stay in Dhaka but must go to the villages to reinvigorate party activities.

She said a democratic government should be run democratically and the party workers should cooperate.

Meanwhile, most of the councillors felt that the fourth council was a total success and had raised the morale of the party workers and leaders.

"It is a moral and organisational boost," Hasina Malek, Pirojpur district president of the BNP and a councillor, told The Daily Star.

About the new leadership she said the party chairperson would announce it shortly.

Advocate Kamruzzaman and Billal Sarker from Matlab echoed the same sentiments, adding that they got a new direction for future politics.

Joynal Abedin of Chandpur said the chairperson assured delegates of a new leadership and direction which would really enliven the party.

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