

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Bad Time for Video Rental Shops

by Iftikhar A Chowdhury

With the arrival of each new consumer item, the former versions of the same category experience a sharp decline in popularity. Probably, this is not the case with consumer items alone. In this highly materialistic world, it is perhaps the ultimate fate with almost anything. Where man's insatiable hunger for power, property and status has become a second nature, this kind of phenomena is not very unlikely.

After the introduction of the Cable TV, of which most middle and high income urban families have become subscribers, the video rental business has been going through hard times. These video rental shops, which experienced a thriving business even a couple of years back are now on the verge of packing their trade. Some of the city's small and medium-sized video rental shops are seriously giving a thought to investing their money in other lucrative trades where the return will not be as dismal as they are receiving from it at present.

Nasim, the proprietor of a video rental shop at Mirpur Road near Dhanmondi R/A, nostalgically recollects that once there was a time when the number of Video Cassette Recorders (VCRs) were few and far between in Dhaka. One even went to the houses of half-acquainted people to see a Hindi or English film. When the prices of VCRs and VCPs became relatively affordable, people began to buy them and video cassette rentals had a booming business.

"Many youths between the age of 18-25 who wasted an ample amount of their time in Togi-foolery or had a deep inclination towards the *film dunya* tip-toed into this business and even became successful," says Nasim, "and this, in a way, helped organise the lives of many youths who were thought to be wasteful elements of the society."

The customers of these video rentals were mostly eager to see Hindi and Indian Bengali films both old and new. The viewers of English

movies were always negligible in comparison to their Hindi and Bengali counterparts. But now a large number among the target viewers have become subscribers of Cable TV and in two of the channels of the Cable TV, namely Doordarshan and Zee TV — they see at least two Hindi films and sometimes one Bengali film daily. So, these two channels have pulled a lot of customers away from the video shops. For obvious reasons, they no longer want to pay for viewing a film which they can see almost free of cost.

The marginal video rental shops in various localities of the city, therefore, are barely able to exist in this trade. "Now most people who come to rent Hindi or Bengali video cassettes want the latest released film which is yet to be screened on those two channels. So, we have to keep as many copies of the newly released films we can get hold of," says a video rental owner.

With profound bitterness tinged with a sense of helplessness he goes on to say that they also used to have a formidable collection of English feature films.

But you see, people who mostly watch English movies do not always come to us for these. Because we are mainly small and medium sized in this business they cannot fully rely on our taste in choosing good English films. They are subscribers of one or two selected video rentals of the city. So, what's left in this business for us now?" he asks.

That the small and medium video libraries are experiencing a down-trend in their business is very true. The other side of the story is that, in a sense, although unfortunate for the men in this trade, for the customers, it is a kind of blessing in disguise. Because as soon as this business becomes competitive enough, people catering to these video rentals will, no doubt receive better service from them. Quality, after all, improves with hardship.



Artist Kamrun Nahar explaining her works to the visitors on the opening day of her third solo painting exhibition at the La Galerie in the city yesterday. Canadian High Commissioner Jon J Scott, who formally inaugurated the week-long show, is also seen. — Star photo

'Social homogeneity in Bangladesh favourable for foreign investment'

Industries Minister A M Zahirul Khan yesterday said Bangladesh is the only homogeneous country in the subcontinent and it must take this advantage for the promotion of national economy through political consensus, reports BSS.

"Due to the social homogeneity, Bangladesh is in a very advantageous position towards attaining political consensus and ensuring the economic development," he said.

Khan said this at the inaugural function of a Japan-Bangladesh joint enterprise, Ishiyu Dry Cleaning Limited at Uttara.

Special envoy to the Prime Minister M Morshed Khan, Secretary of IRD and Chairman of Board of Revenue Dr Ali Akbar Khan and Japanese Charge de Affairs Yoshihisa Kuroda also spoke on the occasion while the chairman of the enterprise Sharif Afzal Hossain presided.

Reviewing the country's economic situation, the minister said the purchasing power parity of Bangladesh is 1206 compared to 1196 in neighbouring India which shows the country's economic potential.

The setting up of joint venture industries and foreign investment in the country's share market also indicate that Bangladesh has earned the confidence of foreign entrepreneurs, he said.

Morshed Khan stressed the need for business innovations particularly in the service sector and welcoming foreign investment in this regard.

He said the present go-

vernment has taken up various measures including reduction of taxes and duties to facilitate the growth of the private sector. A task force has also been formed recently by the Prime Minister to provide more facilities to the industrial and import-export sectors, he said.

Speaking on the occasion Japanese envoy Kuroda said the setting up of this dry cleaning company with Japanese collaboration is the outcome of the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's recent visit to Japan which made the Japanese entrepreneurs encouraged to invest in Bangladesh. He also referred to the recent visit of the high-powered Japanese business delegation, Keidanren mission, and expressed his hope that more Japanese investors would be interested to invest in Bangladesh after this visit.

Ctg newsmen go on strike

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 1: The journalists in Chittagong city today began their 24-hour strike at the call of Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ).

The strike was called to protest the police action on the journalists who were on duty to cover the APSU rally on July 27 in front of Bipanji Biman crossing here.

Due to the strike, no local newspapers will be published in Chittagong tomorrow. Besides, the leaders of CUJ urged the newspaper agents in Chittagong not to distribute national dailies here tomorrow.

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Kamrun's solo painting show begins

By Staff Correspondent

The third solo painting exhibition of Kamrun Nahar began yesterday at the La Galerie, 54 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, at Banani in the city.

Canadian High Commissioner in Bangladesh Jon J Scott inaugurated the week-long show at a simple ceremony.

Forty-five recent works of the artist in oil, water colour and batik have been put on display. The exhibition will remain open to the visitors from 9 am to 8 pm everyday till August 7.

Inaugurating the show, the High Commissioner said Kamrun Nahar is a painter of great promise and tremendous potential. "She looks at nature in all its majesty and beauty with the eyes of a Bengali without the influence of the West as such."

Yet when it comes to technique, she leans towards cosmopolitan trends but with caution and care," he said.

Recalling late SM Ali's comment on the first exhibition of the artist, Scott said, "he also said that she is not an artist of ivory tower."

"She probably puts her children to bed and leaves the light on in the living room for her journalist husband who comes home late after finishing his night duty, somehow she finds time to devote to her art," Scott quoted SM Ali as saying.

Kamrun Nahar organised her first solo exhibition in February last year.

A mother of two, Kamrun did her BFA from the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University, in 1980. Currently she is working as a senior designer with a leading advertising firm.

Fundamentalism resistance fortnight begins

By DU Correspondent

The speakers at a rally in the city yesterday alleged that the fundamentalist forces were jeopardizing the spirit of independence, democracy and development process in the country.

They were addressing the inaugural session of the

Fundamentalism Resistance

fortnight organised by the

Sammilita Sangskriti Jote at the Central Shaheed Minar in the afternoon.

The rally was attended by Sufia Kamal, Syed Hasan Imam, Faiz Ahmed and others.

Beijing lauds Dhaka's economic management

Chinese Finance Minister Liu Zhongli lauded the Bangladesh achievement in macro economic management saying, "China has many things to learn from the experience of Bangladesh in creating an enabling environment for speedy development," according to a message received here yesterday, reports BSS.

The Chinese Finance Minister was holding discussion with Bangladesh Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman who is now on a visit to China at the invitation of the Chinese government.

Zhongli said China was particularly appreciative on Bangladesh's success in controlling inflation.

Saifur apprised his Chinese counterpart of the reform measures being undertaken in Bangladesh while the Chinese minister apprised him of the

efforts being made by the Chinese government in handling the problems of over heated economy.

Saifur Rahman showed keen interest in the measures taken by the Chinese government in handling the problems of loss making and inefficient state-owned enterprises and to make them viable to face the competition.

Earlier, the Bangladesh Finance Minister who arrived in China Monday met the members of Bangladesh community in Beijing and called upon them to make efforts to project the changed image of Bangladesh.

The Finance Minister narrated the government's achievements in regard to self-sufficiency in food production, the immunisation programme, education and poverty alleviation.

Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology

Dhaka

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No. P & D/L.P-1 (340/1994-95/D-229 (2) Dated 1/8/94

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the bonafide suppliers for supply of Hard Coke.

Intending tenderers shall have to obtain permission for purchasing tender papers etc, on application to the undersigned. Application must accompany G.I.R. certificate, Trade licence and certificate of experience about concern works/supplies etc. from reputed organisations. Tender papers and other terms & conditions will be available from the office of the undersigned on payment of Tk. 300/- (non-refundable) to the Sonali Bank, B.U.E.T branch, Dhaka. Each tender must accompany a Bank Draft or Pay Order from nationalised bank amounting to 5% of the quoted amount as earnest money deposited in favour of the Comptroller of this University without which no tender will be considered. Tenders must be put into the tender box kept for this purpose in this office up to 2-30 P.M. of 11.8.94 and will be opened on the same day at 2-35 P.M. before the tenderers present.

The University authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders or one or more items of any tender without assigning any reason whatsoever.

No tender papers will be sold on the opening day of the tender.

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নিজৰ তহবিল থেকে

২৩৩.৬৪ কোটি টাকার

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শুধুমাত্র চলতি বহরের পাঁচ মাসে পরিশোধ করা হয়েছে ১০.৩৪ কোটি টাকার দাবী

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Weather

Temperature may rise

Light to moderate rain or thundershower are likely at many places over Chittagong and Barisal divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions during the 24 hours ending 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Moderately heavy falls may occur over the regions of Chittagong and Noakhali during the period.

Met office says, day temperature is likely to rise by one to two degree Celsius across the country.

The sun sets today (Tuesday) at 6:41 pm and rises tomorrow (Wednesday) at 5:29 am.

The maximum and minimum temperature and humidity in some cities and towns were recorded yesterday as follows:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in Percentage	
	Max	Min	3 am	6 pm
Dhaka	34.1	27.6	72	72
Chittagong	32	25.5	76	—
Rajshahi	34.5	25	86	73
Khulna	34	26.9	81	67