

SSC Question Leakage: Genesis of the Problem

by Md Asadullah Khan

"If the teachers perform their duties properly in teaching the students, give them regular home tasks, take regular class tests and keep them aloof from private tuitions, there would be no unfair practice in examinations."

THE recent incident of leakage of the SSC question papers has stunned the whole nation. Nothing could be more shocking for a nation that has put the highest priority on education through budgetary allocation, to be exposed to such disgraceful situation. The first ever attempt of the education boards to hold the SSC examination centrally on a single set of questions for all the boards, that involved about seven lakh students, got a severe jolt. The whole nation seethed with rage over such a gross mismanagement and inept handling of, and indifference of the official of the ministry concerned to such a vital and sensitive issue. This has brought one thing to the fore that the whole process starting from setting the questions up to distributing those to different centres of the country lacked proper planning, security measures, efficient handling and a fool-proof and honest endeavour.

One cannot miss the fact that these unpretentious boys and girls at the prime of their careers, most of them through sincere pursuit of studies and devotion, were making a maiden venture to sit for the examination that would have given them a sense of confidence and a measure of aptitude for further exercise at higher levels of education. Understandably, when a student learns just the night before the examination that the question paper of the examination he is to appear in the next morning has been leaked out and some of his peers are making use of it, his sense of pride, confidence and competence gets totally shattered. Even the most meritorious student runs into despair, anguish and a state of helplessness.

It must be a gross neglect of responsibility for people at the helm of affairs in the ministry concerned and education boards to have shelved their share of participation and onus of burden that put the credibility of the boards and image of the nation at stake. This only pinpoints the fact that management of educational policies is 'nobody's baby and we are masters at passing the buck'. This has, at the same time, made this point clear that this woefully inadequate and inept infrastructure in the arena of education needs to be energised on an emergency basis to produce economic growth for the country through meaningful dissemination of education not only by planning of policies but by implementation as well.

The educational scene in the country has been in doldrums. Both guardians and students have almost lost their confidence in the education system, presumably, because of its inability to straightaway enable the incumbent in making a living far less bringing about security, comfort, ease etc. Teaching and learning have in these days, become a commodity for sale. Students are not learning at home with any amount of seriousness. Throughout the country, even in the lanes and by-lanes of the cities, district towns and thanas there has been a mushroom growth of coaching centres that go by the name 'ideal' or 'sure success' selling educa-

tion in the form of 'capsules'. In fact, students taught in these centres are not learning the "basics" rather they are stuffed with suggestions and probable questions that sometimes dis-appoint them totally. These coaching centres in a relentless bid to make their business booming, draw more students in their circle and who knows, as alleged, are not sometimes engaged in an unholy alliance with other agencies that have access to board question papers! This year's SSC question paper leakage speaks of one of the following possibilities: pilferage i) from the BG Press, ii) during despatch in the transit, iii) during storage at the thana, treasury or bank safe vault, and iv) unfortunately through, by the teachers and moderators who had framed the questions. The probe body formed by the government, it is expected, would try to identify the culprit in this scam.

Reports available in the leakage of question paper in 1995 in West Bengal revealed that some tutorial home of Calcutta was involved in that scandal. People cannot rule out the possibility of a link of the coaching centres in our country in this racket. Administration in our country has hardly taken any notice of the activities of these coaching centres that are rather doing a great disservice to the nation at the expense of the bigger wealth — the potential and bright students of the country. Ironically speaking, the country can take pride in the growth of three things in its democratic set up: i) nursing home and pathological labs, ii) tutorial home, and iii) English medium nursery school. In the government hospitals doctors want their patients to be treated in the clinics where they are the attending physicians, teachers in the schools want their students to be admitted in the tutorial homes which they have set up in different parts of the cities and towns. Guardians feel happy and relieved in just transferring the responsibility of educating their wards on the tutorial homes but they are hardly aware of the damage they inflict on their wards and realise it too late when either their wards cut a sorry figure in the examinations or roam the streets as vagabonds and no cure is available. Actually, the country is forging ahead in a field where many countries fear to tread; the hazardous nature of teaching that does out modules of selected questions and their answers that does not bring about any improvement in the student's basics. Teachers in schools and colleges have started coaching almost on a commercial scale, often at the expense of teaching in classrooms.

Recalling the observation of President Justice Shahabuddin on 3rd April at the centenary celebrations of Pingna High School in Sarishabar thana of Jamalpur district, we emphasise that the President has rightly pointed out the ills of the present school and college level teaching. He has rightly asserted that "If the teachers

perform their duties properly in teaching the students, give them regular home tasks, take regular class tests and keep them aloof from private tuitions, there would be no unfair practice in examinations." People would agree with the President's contention that in his school days only the less meritorious students would have sought the private tutor's help. Evidently, rather than giving the students the cherished objective, the system has bred corruption in the teaching profession beyond rectification. Allegations and assumption are leaked out in collusion with other agencies, certificates are forged and deficient students are sent up for appearing at the examinations conducted by the boards, often in exchange of high monetary benefit. Since the ills have accumulated much earlier almost just at the primary level of teaching, the nation has started paying the heavy price for this gross neglect, indifference and callousness of education planners. To stem this tide of total breakdown in the system, educational planners have to work with a missionary zeal almost at the grassroots level. There are, of course, some solutions ready at hand to repair the damage and stop the rot from spreading any further.

The government must enforce restrictions on the growth of coaching centres. Centres that want to cater education to the youth must apply for registration detailing the names of the teachers, their experiences and the number of students they are handling. Tax people should not stay away from these coaching centres allowing the operators to make lakhs of taka every month without paying any tax.

Shockingly true, other than a handful of qualified and efficient teachers available in some of the places, the country suffers from a general dearth of experienced teachers in English and Mathematics. To give education, at the early stages, further boost government can pick up some best teachers of different subjects from different corners of the country and bring them to Dhaka to give at least an hour-long lecture over TV on some selected topics of textbooks of the Secondary and Higher Secondary stage. It would be almost like a live lecture class on TV gallery participated by students. This would inspire students, and other teachers to be more responsive to their vocations. Needless to mention, these teachers even if they do not demand any fee must be paid a high honorarium. The names of such teachers would be forwarded to the Education Ministry by a committee comprising the DC and local MPs. In a bid to honour these dedicated group of teachers, and in recognition of the qualities of their head and heart, honest endeavour and selfless efforts they are putting in day in and day out much beyond the knowledge of the countrymen, a cross-section of them alternately should be invited to attend state level functions like Victory Day, Independence Day

celebrations and listened to him spellbound while he spoke on the life and activities of our Prophet Mohammad (SM), poet Quazi Nazrul Islam and Rabindra Nath Tagore — during the observance of anniversary days at the school premises. Significantly for this time, he was a Hindu teacher. But he was much above religious or sectarian and nurturing of merit and talent was the *sine qua non* of his life. It so happened that the SDOs, all of them learned people often invited him for a breakfast meeting just in recognition of his merit, motivation and learning.

In a society torn asunder by conflict, hatred and eroding fast under the influence of wealth and authoritarian spirit, we need the idealism of such teachers to show us the path of enlightenment, virtue and glory.

Agreeing with the education minister, people also believe that some organised group might be involved in this question-leakage scandal. Some people also hunch that there might have been involvement of political interests to undermine the government with vile interest by the vested group to play up the situation and reap political benefit out of it. Taking all these for granted that could happen in the changed atmosphere of hatred and anti-

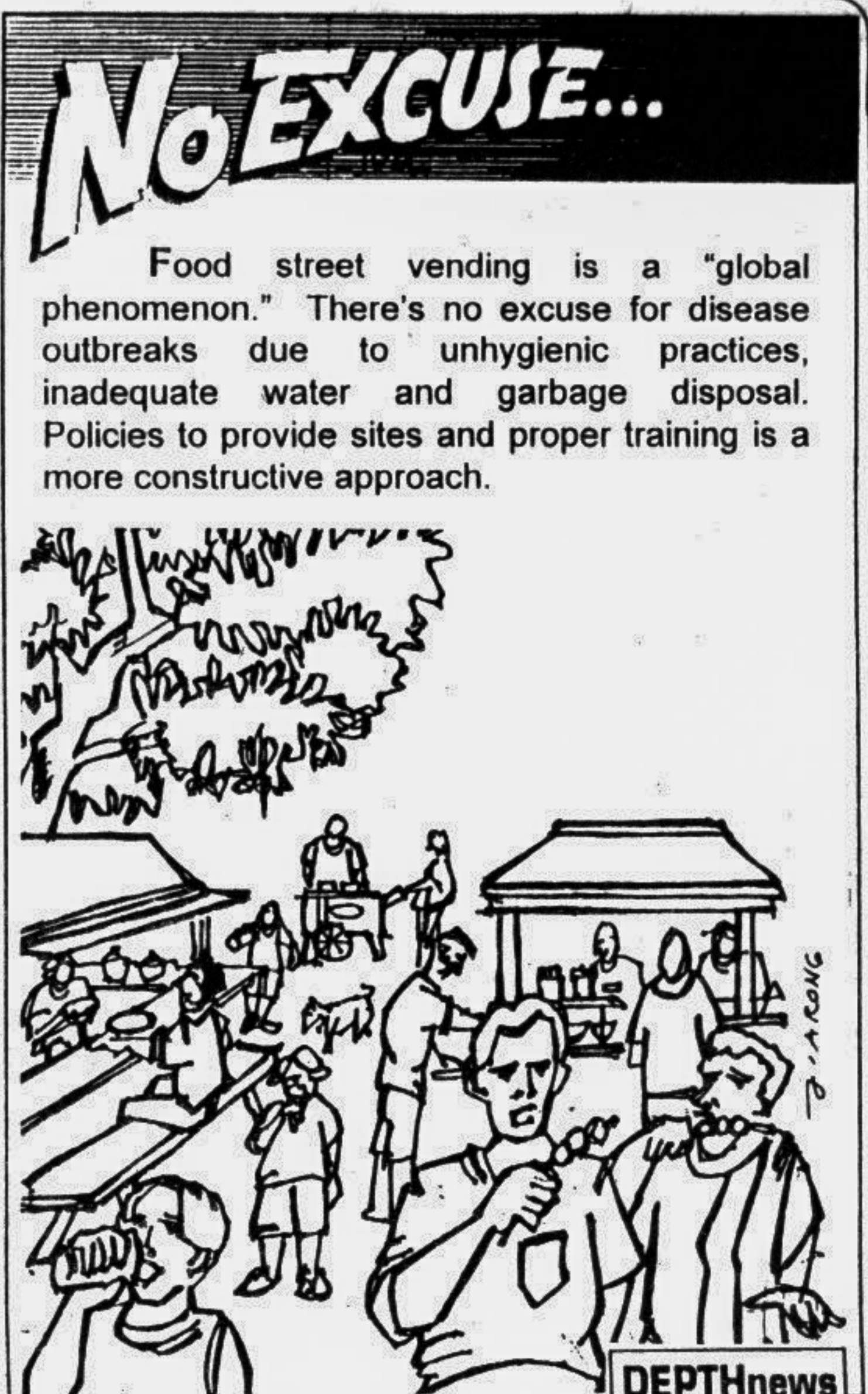
mosity, how could one compromise the situation that led to wrong distribution of question papers in the Chokoria centre of Cox's Bazar and Haluaghat of Mymensingh? The question that looms large in the minds of the perplexed parents is how long this would continue to vitiate the atmosphere in the educational arena? There is no dispute or second thought about the contention that education is the single sector where no compromise can be allowed.

Prime Minister has rightly asserted that an educated populace, male or female is more equipped to face the challenges of modern time, to fight gender inequality and gender discrimination that continue to perplex people and bedevil governmental effort to set the society in the right direction. But, it is precisely true, that we have given more thoughts in formulating policies than implementing it.

In the backdrop of the Prime Minister's assertion of the old truth that education alone can transform a backward community eroding fast by extremist ideas and bigotry, we have reasons to feel happy about her intention to spend Taka 10,585 crore for the development of education during the next five-year plan period. That calls for raising the standard of education, instituting teachers' training programmes, creating job-oriented education and strengthening the universities by pragmatic planning. Let not the education sector be a further casualty because of machinations by self-seeking, corrupt and ill-inspired people.

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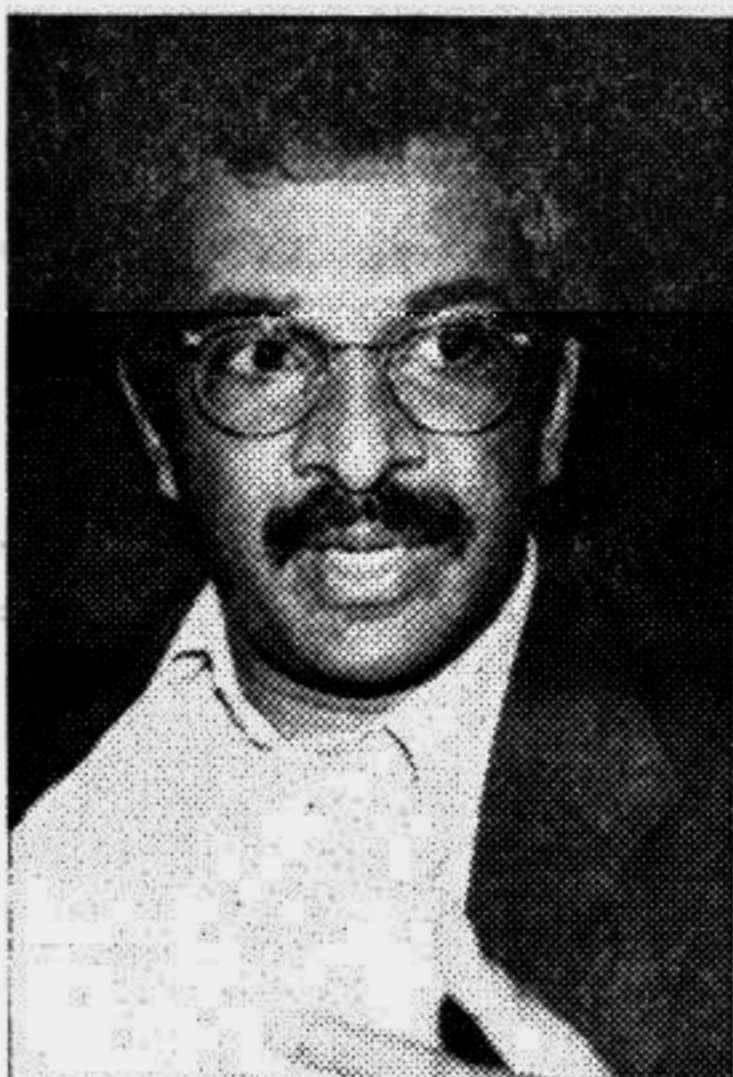
Prime Minister has rightly asserted that an educated populace, male or female is more equipped to face the challenges of modern time, to fight gender inequality and gender discrimination that continue to perplex people and bedevil governmental effort to set the society in the right direction. But, it is precisely true, that we have given more thoughts in formulating policies than implementing it.



INTERVIEW

Promoting Rights and Monitoring Violations

Nurul Kabir talks to Jody Kollapen, Member, South African Human Rights Commission



A democratic government is always expected to maximise public participation while formulating the structure, powers and functions of a Human Rights Commission," said Jody Kollapen, a member of the South African Human Rights Commission.

promote human rights and monitor the violations. "But the institution must be a really independent one, especially when the state and other law enforcing agencies are the violators of human rights in around 90 per cent cases in the third world countries," Kollapen said. He also added that the HRCs of the countries like Bangladesh should have the legal mandate of safeguarding, side by side, with civil and political rights of the citizens, their social and economic rights.

dealing with the structure, functions and powers of the Human Rights Commission. A parliamentary committee, comprising one member each from the political parties having representation in Parliament, was formed to prepare a list of personalities for the 11-member Commission. The committee invited the people to propose the names of 'appropriate' persons. As a result, the committee initially received around 300 names. Of them, the committee nominated around 150 people for 11 posts, including the chairperson. The parliamentary body then shortlisted 50 persons for 'public interview', which was open to the media.

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Monday 21st April (All programmes are in local time. There may be changes in the programmes.)

BTV
3:00 Opening announcement, Al-Quran Programme summary 3:10 News in Bangla 3:15 Patriotic song 3:20 Recitation from the Bible 3:25 Cartoon Film: The Lone Ranger 3:50 Rerelease of selected programmes 4:45 Educational programme 5:00 News in Bangla 5:25 Dolan Champa 5:50 Sports programme 6:30 Anu Paramanu 6:50 Open University 7:00 The News 7:25 Band show 8:00 News in Bangla 8:45 Package Drama 10:00 News in English 10:30 Janamat 10:50 Comedy series: Seemfield 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Tuesday's programme 11:40 Close down

BBC
6:00am BBC World News 6:30 Time Out: Top Gear 7:00 BBC World News in: World Business Report/Asia Today/24 Hours 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 World Focus: Assignment 11:00 BBC Newsdesk 12:00 BBC Newsdesk 12:30 Hard Talk 1:00 BBC World News 1:30 World Focus: Assignment 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Clothes Show 3:00 BBC World News 3:30 Hard Talk 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 Time Out: Top Gear 5:00 BBC Newsdesk 6:00 BBC Newsdesk 6:30 World Focus: Assignment 7:00 BBC World News 7:15 World Business Report 7:30 BBC News Hour Asia & Pacific 8:30 Time Out: Film 9:30 BBC World News 9:30 Hard Talk 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out: Tomorrow's World 11:00 The



Tara on Zee TV at 2:30 pm

STAR PLUS
6:00am Nanny and the Professor 6:30 Ninaad 7:30 Good Morning India 9:30 Aerobics Oz Style 10:00 Pierre Franey's Cooking in France 10:30 Videofashion Report/24 Hours 5:00 BBC World News 5:10 Newsnight

STAR SPORTS
6:00am Volvo World Cup Showjumping 9:00/97 7:00 ISF World Tour 7:30 India Tour West Indies 5th Test Match Day 4 HL 8:30 ICC Trophy 1997 Quarter Finals E1 Vs E2 2:00 Asia Sports Show-30 2:30 India Tour West Indies 5th Test Match Day 4 HL 3:30 Commonwealth Bank Cycling Classic 4:30 Volvo World Cup Showjumping 9:00/97 5:30 Trans World Sport 6:30 BT Global Challenge 7:00 India Tour West Indies 5th Test Match Day 4 HL 8:00 Live India Tour of West Indies 1997 5th Test Match Day 5 from Guyana 10:00 Spanish Fball League 11:00 Live India Tour of West Indies 1997 5th Test Match Day 5 from Guyana 3:30 Super League Rugby 5:30 Mida Cup

STAR MOVIES
7:30 Classic: Nosteratu PG (Silent Movie) 9:30 Film Club: The Mambo Kings 15:11:30 Family: Black Beauty 12 (Hindi Subtitles) 1:30 Classic: Ill Met By Moonlight PG (Hindi Subtitles) 3:30 Family: The Return of Tommy Tricker PG (Hindi Subtitles) 5:30 Action: F/X 2.15 (Hindi Subtitles) 7:30 Adventure: The Tomorrow Man 15:9:30 This Week That Year 10:00 Comedy: Torch Show Trilogy 12:00 Best Of The Boogymen: Leatherface - Texas Chainsaw Massacre 3 18 2:00 Action: Rolling Thunder 18 4:00 Horror: The Uncanny 18 (Arabic Subtitles) 5:30 Thriller: Feaestalk 15

EL TV
12:30 HFF 2:00 Tehkikat 2:30 Parag No. 1 3:00 Anurag 3:30 Y Must Must Show 4:00 HFF (B/W) 7:00 Music Capsules 7:30 Stand By 7:40 Music Capsules 8:30 Hasseen Pal 8:40 Fat Or Fit 9:00 Awaaz Naye Andaz Waahe 9:30 V3+ 10:00 HFF 1:00 Hey Ha Ho 1:30 L T Chalo Cinema 2:00 Gurjat Band 3:00 Shatranj 3:30 Rubaru 4:00 Dard 4:30 ZED 5:00 HFF 7:50 Hasseen Pal 8:00 L T Chalo Cinema 8:30 Sorry Meri Lorry 9:00 Tehkikat 9:30 Superhit Hungama 10:30 Stand By 12:40 HFF

PTV
8:00am Tilawat Aur Tarjuma/Hamd/Naat 8:20 Cartoon 8:30 Khabrain 8:45 Abb Pata Challa 9:05 Khat Farmaish 9:20 Sargam Sargam 9:45 Ilaaj-Bill-Ghiza Pakistan 10:05 Shab Daigh 10:35 English Film: Gool Troop

DD 7
10:30 Janmadin 10:35 Educ Prog 11:00 Najruteet 11:15 Folk Songs 11:30 Parliament Hour 12:30 Monorama Cabin 1:00 Janmabhumi 1:30 Trishna 2:00 TBA 2:30 Gaan Nie 3:00 Bahar (Serial) 3:30 Feluda-30 5:05 Nepali Programme 5:30 News 5:35 Desh Bidesher Khela 6:00 Pali Katha 6:30 Tarundur Janney (Drama Serial) 6:55 Bhangran (Serial) 7:30 Bangla Sambat 7:55 Dinandin 8:00 Anya Bhuban 8:30 Feluda-30 9:00 Janmabhumi 9:30 Monorama Cabin 10:00

SONY ET
8:30am Yaadon Ki Baarat 9:00 The Three Stooges 9:30 Dennis The Menace 10:00 I Dream Of Jeannie 10:30 Bewitched 11:00 Taak Jhank 11:30 Gaane Jaane Mane/Faasle (Serial) 12:00 Ghaav 12:30 Premier 1:00 Aahat 1:30 The Young And The Restless (Eng. Serial) 2:30 Cine Matinee-Hindi Film 5:30 The Three Stooges 6:00 Dennis The Menace 6:30 Yaadon Ki Baarat 7:00 I Dream Of Jeannie 7:30 Bewitched 8:00

Surf-Wheel Of Fortune 8:30
Humsa Barker Gong 9:00 Jevan Mirtu (Serial) 9:30 Yeh Sadi Nahi Ho Sakti (Serial) 10:00 Chamatkar (Drama Serial) 10:30 Kash 11:00 Premier 11:30 The Young And The Restless 12:30 BSA Star Ki Pasand 1:00 O'Mana (Serial) 1:30 Pehli Muakat 2:00 Surf-Wheel Of Fortune 2:30 Premier 3:00 Closed.

World, the 24-hour news channel, is now seen in 17.7 million homes across Asia, making it the region's number 1 news channel. In the past 12 months BBC World has expanded the number of satellites it uses to serve the Asia-Pacific region. It now transmits from PanAmSat 4, PanAmSat 2, JCSat 2 and Apstar 2 satellites. BBC World can now be seen in the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East and across Asia in Hong Kong, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam and Japan. BBC World is also available in 170,000 hotel rooms across Asia.

