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Down to Earth

Children's Exposure to Violence and Smoking on TV

By A S M Nurunnabi

On BTV screen, several popular adventure films (with Bangla dubbing) are shown. Such films as Sinbad, Hercules and Robinhood are immensely liked not only by children and teen-agers but even by adults.

In most of such televised films, there is always the element of violence. This is true not only in respect of such films televised on BTV, but also, thanks to widespread cable network operating in city areas in respect of a large number of foreign films which are generally telecast through satellite channels.

The cause for concern arises from the fact that children, in particular, are exposed overwhelmingly to scenes of violence in these films in the forms of bloody battles with swords, knives, guns, clubs and what not. The element of violence is also displayed in scenes of free hand fighters, boxing and various forms of physical contortions. Children go head over heels when they watch such dare-devil physical acts.

Besides such kinds of films dished out by our national channel, there is a spate of serial foreign films served on satellite channels, glorifying violence in the garb of patriotism, and social justice. Experts say there is a growing correlation between the aggressive content shown on the screen and its imitation among noble minds.

That is why everybody, parents and guardians in particular needs to be vigilant because children tend to act out in real life what they see on the TV screens. These innocent viewers do not know that the impossible acts or feats, such as jumps from mountain heights, or walking on slender rope or chain, or fighting dexterously single-handed with a dozen ad-

versaries are all a matter of camera work, and absurd and risky in real life. According to a UNESCO report, children are unescapably being surrounded by an environment where both media and real experiences support the view that violence is "natural". According to that report, in the last six years, the quantum of violent content has gone up many times due to the channel boom but there is a lack of self-censorship.

With the absence of adequate child specific regional literature, children have turned to programmes meant for adults and as most of these serials are aired on prime time when the whole family sit together to watch the various programmes. As noted above, the children are lured into the act of violent drama which they try to copy in their actual life.

What can be the possible means of tackling the adverse impact the violence-prone TV programmes produced on the minds of children? It is true that once in a while, juvenile programmes creating excitement may serve as entertainment for a child. But it is widely felt that running a regular fixed days programme with contents of violence in a more or lesser degree cannot but be highly damaging to juvenile morals. Because it helps mould child habits and psychology along lines of violence. It has been noted by keen observers that violence is used as an opiate by the producers to hook the advertisers and lure children.

Taking into account the totality of violence-prone serials aired through different satellite channels, which children in some ways or other cannot avoid watching, there is a general feeling that all producers are not friendly to the idea of censorship of some kind at a

time when they are minting money byshowing details of sensational crimes.

It is believed that an effective means of tackling the problem can be showing children specific programmes with the support of child friendly advertisers which may go a long way in checking the cult of violence.

Experts also view that parental guidance along with sensitising the media may help in tackling the after-effects of violence. One reason for entertainment TV programmes for the children to be most carefully crafted and screened is that nothing equals the visual impact of these programmes on the child or young mind.

Similarly injurious is the smoking advertisements on TV. It is of concern that satellite TV manages to circumvent local bans on smoking advertisements. Though Bangladesh Television does not allow cigarette advertisements, there are some foreign TV channels which continue to carry them out. It is felt imperative that some way be found to protect the young from the onslaught of advertising of cigarettes. The correlation between smoking and advertising is quite obvious as the correlation between smoking and lung cancer.

There are often sights of people smoking in rooms in which children are present regardless of the harm it has for them. If the young have to be protected, it is felt that stronger legislation is called for, even if this results in some loss of revenue. The effects of passive smoking on children and non-smokers are just as bad as smoking. With smoking addiction growing and smoking-related diseases rising, some way must be found to stop this flood of advertisements via satellite.

JCD to protest PM's arrival at DU tomorrow

By DU Correspondent

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of opposition BNP, will stage a demonstration on the Dhaka University campus tomorrow to protest Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's arrival at the university.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit the university Sunday morning to inaugurate a sculpture at Fuller Road.

The programme was announced by JCD at a press conference at the Madhu's Canteen yesterday afternoon. JCD leaders Monzur Elahi, Munshi Bazila Basit Arjun, A B M Mosharraf Hossain and Monir Hossain were present.

JCD leaders said they will bring out a procession on the campus with black flag soon after the arrival of Sheikh Hasina.

They said Hasina has lost her credibility to come to the campus as her party's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League captured all the residential halls of DU by ousting JCD workers.

Discrimination

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Development (ICPD) to declare their goals - to achieve universal access to reproductive health information and services by 2015. Yet the right is denied in Bangladesh, the UNFPA report said.

The current international understanding of sexual and reproductive rights includes the right to equality and equity for women and men to enable individuals to make free and informed choices in all spheres of life, free from gender discrimination.

Some of the terrible effects of denial of these rights in Bangladesh include, annual death of some 20,000 women from birth related complications and about 800,000 men's annual regulations - a large percentage of it suffering from permanent injury due to unsafe abortion.

More than half of the mothers have been found to be acutely malnourished, thousands of them dying from reproductive tract diseases including sexually transmitted diseases (STD).

Reaching family planning services at doorsteps is a remarkable achievement for population control but women, traditionally confined to their homes, need to reach the fixed outlets for more essential services, the report said.

The most effective and practical way to improve the country's prospects is to give the power of reproductive choice to the people. To do this, necessary social investment needs to be prioritised. The policy should be to redress the injustice on women, enabling them to make choice on an equal basis with men," said an executive of a women's rights organisation.

Liaison body

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He declined to elaborate but said the Committee will sit soon to finalise programmes.

Later talking to The Daily Star IOJ leader ARM Abdul Matin said: We are ultimately proceeding towards a one-point out-government movement. We had preliminary discussions on the strategy of the movement.

Replying to a question on the proposed government-opposition dialogue to resolve the current political crisis, he said the opposition parties are unanimous that such a dialogue can only take place after cancellation of the municipal polls results. "There is no compromise with the demand for cancellation of the polls results," he added.

The meeting in a resolution expressed "grave concern" over the current "crisis" and high prices of fertiliser, which is "seriously hampering agricultural production".

It alleged that the government had miserably failed to ensure supply of fertiliser to farmers, specially in the country's northern regions. Prices of fertiliser were enhanced five times in the last three years, it claimed.

It demanded adequate supply of fertiliser and reduction of its price.

The Liaison Committee in another resolution said that the government, instead of arresting the killers of JCD leader Sajal Chowdhury, has arrested the victim's sister-in-law, Neaz Ahmed.

Sajal was gunned down in the city during an opposition-called hartal on February 9. Neaz is the No 1 witness in the murder case.

It said the arrest of Neaz and filing of "false cases" against him clearly proved that ruling party men were directly involved in the killing of Sajal.

It demanded immediate withdrawal of the cases against Neaz, his release and arrest of the killers.

The liaison meeting in its another resolution strongly condemned the attack on JP Chairman's motorcade during his visit to Rangpur.

Shop owners

From Page 1

the opposition parties to agitate in a destructive way, creating frustration among the people, it added.

Rigid attitude of the ruling and the opposition parties on political issues is leading the country towards destruction, the statement said.

All initiatives taken so far by the country's apex business body Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) went in vein due to lack of response from both the ruling party and the Opposition, FBCCI said.

PM unveils

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Vice Chancellor's official residence yesterday. Sikder said that the first inauguration of the sculpture was held in a non-formal, homely atmosphere and that it was not complete then. "Even the VC did not attend the programme because of such informality," she added.

"Besides, I had plans to expand the sculpture," she said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will unveil the *Shwadinatar Sangram* tomorrow at the Fuller Road intersection on the Dhaka University campus.

The DU authorities have spent around Tk Seven lakh for the renovation and shifting of the sculpture.

The renovated 60-foot tall sculpture displays the glorious history of the struggle of the Bengali nation. It records the history of the Language Movement of 1952, the movement for autonomy in 1966, the mass uprising in 1969 and the events of Liberation War in 1971, the historic speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 7, the dark night of March 25, proclamation of independence on March 26 and the final victory on December 16. The sculpture also narrates the night of August 15 when Bangabandhu along with almost all of his family members including Sheikh Russel, a child of only nine, was brutally killed.

Having a built-in light and sound system, the sculpture also depicts the symbol of freedom - the green and red national flag.

Solar cooker

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solar system is not working in absence of the sun.

There were many other housewives at Anando Solar Park with solar cookers and cooking demonstration. Like Anowara, they use solar cookers in the household.

Anando, an NGO operating in six districts of Bangladesh, launched the solar centre with a view to popularising the use of cheap and efficient renewable solar energy in the country.

Inaugurating the solar park, adviser to Anando Father Klaus Beurle stressed creating employment opportunities for overall development. "People, particularly the youths will be benefited if they cannot be provided with employment," Father Klaus said.

Funded by some institutions from Germany, at least 135 solar systems have already been installed by Anando under its solar project, he said.

A solar cooker costs Tk 1,000 for the poor and its beneficiaries. The cookers are also on sale at Tk 3,000 each on commercial basis with a down payment of Tk 200 and Tk 25 for every monthly installment.

Among others, Anando Director Prof Abdullah Al Amin, Cultural Director Ashim Saha, Dr SSMA Khorasani of Dhaka University, Engineer Khurshedul Islam, Dr MI Rashid of BUET and a huge enthusiasts from the locality were present at the inaugural function of the solar park.

Pakistan worries about India's chemical weapons stockpile

ISLAMABAD, Mar 5: Having fought three wars against its neighbour India, Pakistan says it's worried about New Delhi's stockpile of chemical weapons, according to a foreign ministry statement issued today, reports AP.

Pakistan's concerns were conveyed to Jose Mauricio Bustani, the director general of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons while on a visit to the federal capital.

According to the foreign ministry statement, Bustani was told of "Pakistan's disappointment (with) the Indian declaration for large chemical weapons stockpiles despite the fact that both countries... had agreed not to acquire or develop chemical weapons."

Pakistan already has signed the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Rejoinder

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against long established practice and tradition of High Court Division that when a case is already listed before a Bench of competent jurisdiction, any other Bench should not hear that case unless the petitioner get the case out of list from that Bench for the purpose of hearing by any other Bench. If any party in a case has any apprehension that he may not get proper justice before a particular Bench, then generally the matter is brought to the notice of Hon'ble Chief Justice who in his absolute discretion decides which Bench should hear that case. It is also not understandable why a particular Bench, when the case is listed in another Bench, should be interdicted and insist to hear a particular case. Such an attitude creates unnecessary apprehension in the mind of litigants, which we the Senior Advocates should avoid.

Many sitting Judges were my juniors but that does not mean that they cannot hear any of my cases. Without aspersion to any Senior Advocate by name I would like to observe that unless we the Senior Advocates, preserve the dignity and reputation of the Courts people will blame us and not the Judges. We as Senior Advocates have some responsibility to the society.

Regarding my position as Legal Adviser vis-a-vis Arab Bangladesh Bank Limited your reporter should get the correct picture from the Managing Director or Chairman of the Bank. On the basis of an old letter, without ascertaining the present facts, no such news should have been published.

Our reply
Rejoinders are issued to correct factual errors of a news report. Throughout your long rejoinder you did not mention a single factual error of our story and have not contested any of our contentions.

We have checked again the contents of our report and found them to be accurate. We, therefore, stand by our story.

Mr Justice Fazlul Huq, in keeping with the long standing tradition of judiciary, has felt embarrassed to hear the case of Arab Bangladesh Bank and Bangladesh Bank against Beximco. By his action he has greatly enhanced the prestige of the judiciary and ensured that justice is not only done, but is seen to be done. Our report was made precisely in that spirit, and not against anybody.

Your comment that "many sitting judges were my juniors but that does not mean that they cannot hear any of cases" misses the point. We stated in our report that while working with you Justice Fazlul Huq - before becoming a judge - handled legal matters of Beximco as its lawyer. Therefore sufficient ground exists for any litigant to raise the issue of conflict of interest. This is what we highlighted in our report and to which, we are delighted to say, Justice Fazlul Huq agreed, by expressing his 'embarrassment'.

You said "Regarding my position as legal advisor vis-a-vis Arab Bangladesh Bank your reporter should get the correct picture." What is the correct picture? You did not tell us in your rejoinder. You are still the legal advisor of Arab Bangladesh Bank and commonsense suggests that there is a conflict of interest when you represent another client against your employer - in this case the Arab Bangladesh Bank.

In several places of your rejoinder you have accused us of not checking our facts. Which facts? Where did we report wrongly? Throughout your long rejoinder you have not denied nor disproved any part of our report, nor have you given any facts.

We fully agree with you when you say "We as senior advocates have some responsibility to the society." Are we carrying out that responsibility? Are we setting the right legal and moral precedents? Let our conscience be our guide in answering that question.

Our report, as always, was motivated by the principle of "Public's Right to Know", to ensure which we will, without fear or favour, do everything necessary.

Peace precondition for dev, engr told PM iterates drastic actions against troublemongers

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned of drastic actions against terrorists, saying whichever party they may belong to, there is no escape for them, reports UNB.

She said the government would never step on public security, peace, stability and development.

"For the development efforts to go unhindered, increasing investments and accelerating industrialisation, a stable and peaceful environment is an imperative," the prime minister said addressing the inaugural ceremony of 43rd convention of the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh in the IEB premises.

"If we fail to resist conspiracy, terrorism and chaos, then stability, industrialisation and development prospects may be jeopardised," Hasina said calling upon all to remain vigilant against this potential threat to peace and order.

"I, as the head of government, want to assure all that terrorists and troublemongers, whichever party they belong to, won't be spared," she reassured, making it clear that none has the right to infringe the rights

and destroy life and property of the people.

Hasina called for the engineers to play their due role in turning the growing population into human resources. She said her government had undertaken liberal investment policy for attracting domestic and foreign investments and speeding up industrialisation.

By 2005 a "revolutionary change" would take place in the fields of education, health, industry and agriculture due to the integrated programmes undertaken by the government, she said.

Hasina said development and progress depend on the advancement and effective application of science and technology. The upcoming 21st century would set out a most modern, technological era.

"We have a pool of knowledge, talents and huge industrial manpower. This manpower has to be groomed as a skilled force," she said asking the engineers to play their part in this regard.

And the government will certainly take proper steps in formulating policies, framing plans and taking other necessary measures.

The prime minister said the engineers are engaged in almost all development works of the country, the lion's share of development budget is spent through the engineers. She called upon them to maintain honesty, accountability and transparency in all their activities.

She said the government was considering the proposals for building the engineers' professional skill and taking other steps for their welfare.

IEB president Prof M A Hannan, honorary general secretary A N H Akhtar Hossain, IEB Dhaka centre chairman Ibrahim Mia, and Motiur Rahman Talukder also addressed the inaugural session.

Earlier, the prime minister handed IEB gold medal to Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury for his outstanding contribution to the profession and development of information technology and Kamruzzaman Bhuiyan (posthumous) for his sacrifice for the nation.

Kamruzzaman fell off a boat and drowned in floodwater while distributing relief among the affected people in 1998.

Rajuk okays bldg plan

From Page 1

freehold landowners in the residential areas have directly been permitted to construct buildings higher than six storeys, one Rajuk official admitted.

A Dhaka Housing and Settlement paper revealed that, in one of its reports, the foundation of the building was cleared for a seven storied construction and that officials did not object to the owner constructing seven floors.

Local house owners charged that Rajuk had 'used' the Housing and Settlement's 'structural report' as a 'camouflage' to violate the government directive on building height in the area. They also alleged that a section of the Housing and Settlement officials was involved in 'frequent' violation of the government directive.

One of the house owners said that almost all the plot owners in the area are prepared to construct up to 10 storeys but are unable to do so due to prohibition by the authorities.

When contacted Rajuk official Asaduzzaman said that the government directive was 'not the law' and that Rajuk is empowered to authorise construction of buildings higher than six stories based on engineering feasibility reports.

However, another senior Rajuk official said that the government directive was as good as the law and that the Rajuk was bound to abide by it. He admitted that malpractice among the concerned Rajuk officials was not new and hence it is likely that 'approving such a plan could take place'.

He also said in many cases people obtained permission to construct stair rooms on the roofs and ended up building full-fledged apartments. Rajuk was investigating several such cases and would soon go for the demolition of the illegal constructions.

In the case of Lalmatia, an official Ramoli Roy, of M/s Saptak Grihany Ltd who are constructing the 7 storied apartment building at Plot No

Ctg crime

From Page 1

valry within the organisation, police reports said.

The same day a tense situation prevailed at Sandwip island after recovery of the body of a BCL activist who was abducted earlier. BCL blamed JCD for the killing but JCD denied the charge.

Kotwali thana, located in the vicinity of CMP headquarters, was attacked in broad day light by some activists of Islami Chhatra Sena on March 1. Two police personnel were injured. Fifteen Sena activists were arrested.

An army man was shot dead by miscreants at Hamjarbagh in the city on February 23. The victim, Badrul Islam, came under attack while returning to Chittagong cantonment.

Extortionists gunned down the manager of a crockeries shop in Mirjapool area on February 22 when he refused to pay toll, police said.

The regional passport office here was attacked by some racketeers and over 5,000 passports were looted by them in the early hours of February 22.

The official bungalow of the chairman of Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) was attacked by armed dacoits and gold ornaments and money were taken away recently.

Another sensational dacoity took place in the house of a doctor at medical staff quarters in the city. The armed dacoits took away about five lakh taka in cash and gold ornaments.

But in both the cases of dacoity, nothing was recovered by police so far.

Besides, incidents of mugging continued unabated in the city.

1/2. Block-C, said the construction was commenced after obtaining 'all necessary clearance from Rajuk'.

Meanwhile, on account of repeated complaints from neighbours, Rajuk carried out an inspection of the aforesaid plot, which revealed numerous deviations from the original plan. Subsequently, Rajuk served a notice to the developer to take corrective measures. But to this day, after almost 2 months since the notice, no such measures have been adopted.

Launch dacoity in Swandip

CHITTAGONG, Mar 5: Pi-

rates looted valuables worth about Tk 15 lakh and injured six passengers of a launch at Gachua Ferry ghat in Swandip thana this noon, reports UNB.

Witnesses said some 20 pirates swooped on the launch MV Al-Amin as soon as it anchored the ghat at about 2 pm and looted away the belongings of the passengers at gunpoint.

The injured were identified as Abul Kalam Azad, Jamshed Alam, Suraiya Begum, Abu Bakar Siddique, Jalal Uddin



A colourful procession was brought out in the city yesterday on the eve of International Women's Day on Monday. —Star photo

'Development should be WTO's main policy'

Outgoing Chairman of the World Trade Organization Committee on Trade and Development (CTD), Dr Iftekhar Chowdhury, who is Bangladesh Ambassador in Geneva has said the WTO, apart from framing rules for global trade should have development as one of its central purposes.

He was making a statement at a session of the CTD in Geneva on Tuesday at the end of his tenure as its chairman for the year 1998-99, according to a message received here yesterday.

He said that by electing him to the office last year, the CTD had honoured Bangladesh.

Speaking on CTD's role during his tenure, Iftekhar said: Working in unison as CTD family, we achieved a great deal in the past year. To give WTO a human face, we sought to emphasize the centrality of development in trade. Endeavouring to find ways and means to bring the marginal to the mainstream, we tried to make participation in WTO worthwhile and exciting for all its members.

"We have not succeeded in everything we attempted. But our great success lies in having attempted everything together."

The CTD elected Ambassador of Senegal to succeed Iftekhar for 1999-2000.

The CTD session, among other things, agreed to recommend to the WTO General Council a decision relating to preferential tariff treatment for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), to be accorded by developing countries.

It may be recalled that WTO's positive initiatives with regard to LDCs was explained at length to authorities here by its Director General Renato Ruggiero during his visit last month.

3 dacoities

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morning, they found a particular shelf of the pearl cabinet broken. Pearls worth at least Tk 2 lakh were missing, said Musfiqa Kamal, chairman of Karika.

The attackers then broke open a drawer of the cash counter where keys of different locks of the shop were kept. They opened a vault and took Tk 6.5 thousand from there.

Before leaving, the attackers left the keys on the cash counter. Two security guards of the market told police that they were sleeping that night and they did not hear any sound of breaking glass.

None was arrested in connection with the incident till last night. A case was lodged with Ramna thana.

In the other incident, the gang of entered a third floor flat at Free School Street at about 10:30 pm Thursday.

Branding firearms and sharp weapons, the robbers tied up the inmates of the flat and took away the licensed gun with 35 rounds of ammunition and gold ornaments worth Tk 2.4 lakh and Tk ten thousand in cash.

Interview

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not face any problem in enjoying GSP facilities. "We will take stern action against quota forgery."

The newly elected leaders will sit with different institutions like customs, banks and port authorities in a bid to have their services to the RMG exporters geared up, and solve the existing problems so that the exporters are not harassed, he said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Board of Investment
(One Stop Service)
Prime Minister's Office
Jiban Bima Tower, 10-Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka

NOTICE



BOI One Stop Service welcomes Local & Foreign Investors to benefit from the services and assistance offered by it

For providing services and assistance to local and foreign investors from one place for implementation of industrial projects, an One Stop Service Centre has been set-up in the Board of Investment (BOI) at 'Jiban Bima Tower' (18th floor), 10, Dilkusha, Dhaka-1000.

Interested industrial investors may take necessary advisory services, institutional and infrastructure supports from BOI One Stop Service in the following areas:

- Industrial Registration;
- Work Permit to the foreign nationals working in BOI's registered units;
- Telephone, Electricity, Gas, Water & Sewerage connection;
- Site & Environment clearance; and
- Solution of problems in case of