



CHITTAGONG
Hotel Hawaii Building
39, Agrabad C.A., Chittagong
Tel # 712127 Fax# 710106

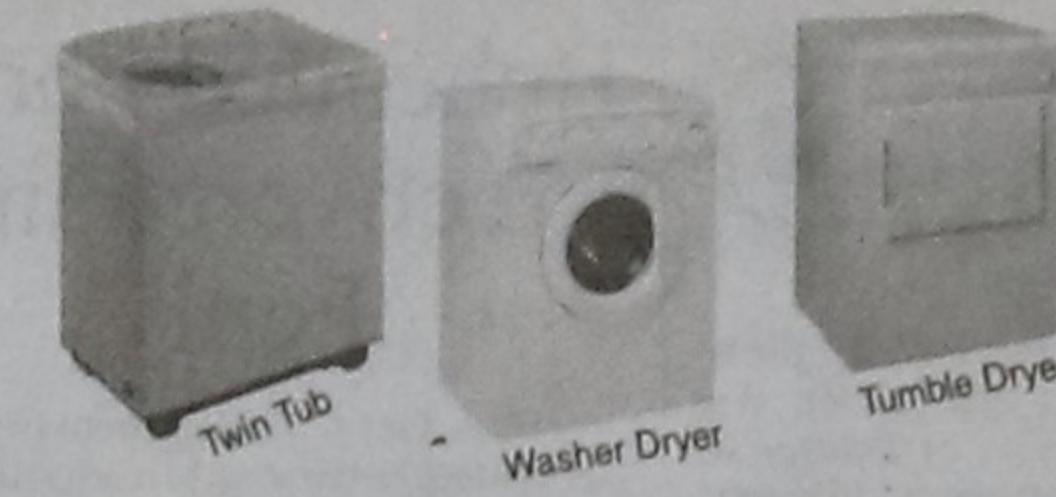
CEPZ

Ctg. Export Processing Zone
Old Admin Building
Halishahar, Chittagong
Tel # 740108 Fax# 710106

KHULNA

K.D.A Building
Khan A. Sabur Road, Khulna
Tel # 725008 Fax# 731932

Whirlpool
Home Appliances USA



Instalment facility available



TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS LTD.
Authorized Distributor in Bangladesh for Whirlpool Appliances, USA
Dhaka: 8115307-10 CTG: 716353, 723578 Khulna: 720304 Bogra: 6215

Down to Earth

Dwindling Cinegoers in City

By ASM Nurunnabi

From a recent news report, it is learnt that the Dhaka city's cinema halls are at present faced with a critical situation on account of dwindling numbers of movie viewers. The situation has lately taken such a bad turn that, as compared with last year, the number has almost halved. The quarters concerned in the film industry now feel extremely uneasy over this development. For this they blame the TV satellite-channels.

During the period spanning from the 40s to 60s, family members from the educated middle and elite classes used to go to cinema halls to enjoy feature films produced in Bombay, Calcutta, UK and Hollywood. At that time, good films were made because, among other factors, movie scripts were based on the writings of eminent authors like Herman Melville, Ernest Hemingway, and Tolstoy, which gave such memorable films like Moby Dick, For Whom the Bell Tolls and War and Peace. The audience in those days were discerning in their cultural tastes leading them to appreciate the creations of great movie directors like David Lean (Lawrence of Arabia), Kurosawa (Roshomon) and Satyajit Ray (Mahanagar).

At present the movies telecast by the satellite channels have turned TV rooms into mini cinema halls for many viewers. As a result, about 10 lakh people connected with film industry are now reportedly under threat of losing their source of living. From sources in the producers and exhibitor's associations, it is

learnt that out of 46 show houses that are licensed to operate in Dhaka, five have already been closed down. In the Dhaka film industry, a good number of filmmakers have reportedly remained inactive on account of a dull period in the industry due to a significant fall in the number of movie-goers. The downward trend in the interest of film viewers has caused concern among film producers and film exhibitors who feel that such a drastic fall in their business never occurred in the past.

To deal with the present prevailing critical situation, a 21-member committee has reportedly been formed with representatives from relevant areas of the film industry. The committee members solely blamed the TV satellite channels for the lack of cinegoers' interest in the locally produced feature films.

According to observers, the slide in Bangladeshi films began from the early 80s when too much emphasis was laid on earning quick money by capitalising on the physical aspects of the heroines rather than their acting abilities. The action and adventure films produced by the local producers were of a poor standard portraying a childish mimicry of violent fights, leaving bad examples for our youths.

These may be some of the reasons causing disgust among some viewers of local films and keeping them away from the cinema halls. On the other hand, the satellite channels offer a variety of Bangla films telecast everyday, some of which may not

be of questionable quality. The committee which has been constituted to safeguard the interests of the local film industry, directed its grievances against the ETV channel, in particular, through which two Bangla films are regularly telecast everyday. When one of such films is shown on the channel from noon, it is said to affect the attendance of the school students, particularly in the rural areas, who desert their classes to view the Bangla films. The prohibition by the teachers and the guardians has reportedly produced little effects in dissuading the students in this regard.

Bangla commercial filmmakers have, therefore, demanded of the government to take necessary steps to save their industry from the hegemony of the satellite channels. Viewers reportedly favour watching such channels for Bangla films telecast at prime times, particularly during weekly holidays when some highly popular films are shown.

In the opinion of observers, there are, of course, flaws in the cinema halls which discourage the viewers to go there for entertainment. Among such flaws they mention the declining standard of film along with poor environment both inside and outside the cinema halls as important factors in causing among the general run of movie viewers. The video cassette culture and the satellite and cable TV have helped them find an alternative.



Wading through knee-deep water and perhaps heading for relief centre, these people in Satkhira's Kolaroa abandoned their dwellings as floodwaters showed no sign of retreat (left); the photo on the right taken by Md. Kamrul Arefin depicts the misery of flood victims at makeshift shelters at Damurhuda Health Complex in Chuadanga

- Star photos

AL plans to stage 'counter show' at Mymensingh

By Nazmul Ashraf

In an apparent bid to counter the massive opposition show at Mymensingh recently, the ruling Awami League is preparing for a 'bigger' public rally there on October 11 at the same venue—Circuit House ground.

The ruling party's target is to mobilise 'more people' at Mymensingh despite an AL campaign against it has prompted the ruling party to go for a similar programme there, sources concerned pointed.

Prime Minister and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to address the rally, to be organised by Sammilita Mukti Joddha Front, a pro-AL platform of freedom fighters.

Led by the prime minister's political adviser Dr SA Malek, the Front has taken up the Mymensingh programme in preparation for its on going programme of holding freedom fighters' people's rallies in the divisional headquarters.

Dr Malek, who is now busy

organising the rally, said the programme's objective is to fight the 'fresh rise of anti-liberation forces including the war criminals' under the banner of opposition alliance.

Fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami in alliance with BNP and Jatiya Party is now hatching a fresh conspiracy against independence. These opposition forces are also trying to suppress the popular demand for trial of the war criminals and to block the process of trial of Bangabandhu's killers," he told this correspondent.

The October 11 rally has become essential for Awami League to gear up its campaign against the opposition alliance that got rejuvenated through the September 25 programme at Mymensingh," a ruling party leader said preferring anonymity.

The scheduled rally also aims at intensifying AL's campaign for the next general elections, he added.

Dr Malek, who is now busy

organising the rally, said the programme's objective is to fight the 'fresh rise of anti-liberation forces including the war criminals' under the banner of opposition alliance.

Fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami in alliance with BNP and Jatiya Party is now hatching a fresh conspiracy against independence. These opposition forces are also trying to suppress the popular demand for trial of the war criminals and to block the process of trial of Bangabandhu's killers," he told this correspondent.

Dr Malek is now on a nine-day visit to Mymensingh and eight adjoining districts to organise ruling party workers, freedom fighters, professionals, intellectuals, businessmen and other social forces for the rally.

Terrorists kill one in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Oct 6: Some terrorists killed one person in presence of police personnel and later abducted the victim's son.

The incident occurred at the remote village of Char Khidirpur in Mathur thana yesterday.

Kalam was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries yesterday evening. Shamu filed a case in this connection with Mathur thana accus- ing 14 people.

Witnesses said, two groups of villagers clashed over a dispute of cutting some trees of the Forest Department on September 28.

A case was filed in this connection against 16 people including Shamu and his three sons Kalam, Kashem and Tutul in this connection.

A contingent of police comprising two sub-inspectors and 12 constables raided the house of Shamu yesterday morning.

Then a group of terrorists dragged Shamu, Kalam, Kashem and Liton out of the house. The terrorists beat them mercilessly with sharp weapons. They hit Kalam in neck and cut his four fingers of the right hand. The terrorists fired when neighbours came to rescue the victims. At this Ohidur and Shamu got bullet injuries.

The terrorists then abducted one Alam and left the place, witnesses said. Police arrested Shamu, Kalam, Kashem and Liton. Motihar thana OC said, the incident occurred before the police went to the spot.

Tension was prevailing in the area.

Khaleda staged drama at Kolaroa to create issue: PM

BENAPOL, JESSORE, Oct 6: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina dismissed as a hoax opposition leader Khaleda Zia's allegation that she was not allowed to visit flood-hit Kolaroa in Satkhira on Thursday, reports UNB.

She (Khaleda) staged a drama at Kolaroa to create an unnecessary issue. She was busy enforcing martial instead of helping the flood victims, I don't know why. But she was on the lookout for an issue," Hasina told a public meeting at the truck terminal, one of few patches of dry land in Sharsha upazila.

The PM said Khaleda did not stand by the flood victims at the time of their distress.

She said the BNP chief was scheduled to visit the area at 3.30 pm. But she changed her schedule and advanced her timetable at 11.30 am with a design to stage the drama and spread false propaganda.

There will not be any benefit of launching false propaganda," the Prime Minister said, adding that the BNP chief had stated that two crore people would die in 1998 floods, which proved wrong.

During the last election campaign, Khaleda Zia also had mounted a propaganda campaign saying that if Awami League was voted to power, Bangladesh would be ceded to India and "uludhani" heard from mosques instead of "azan." But in last four years, none has heard "uludhani."

The PM alleged although BNP stated that Bangladesh would turn into an Indian market if Awami League formed government, it is BNP's Finance Minister Saur Rahman who relegated the country to a market of Indian goods by slashing duties overnight from 300-400 per cent to 30-40 per cent.

Referring to the signing of the Ganges water treaty with India, Hasina said Bangladesh realised its legitimate share on the Ganges waters that helped produce bumper crops. As a result, there is enough stock of food from which the government is distributing relief among the flood victims.

Witnesses said the terrorists, allegedly belonging to ruling party, attacked Staff Reporter of the daily Prothom Alo Ekramul Huq Bulbul in the morning.

The gang severely beat him up and tried to shoot him, but he managed to escape the attempt on his life getting into a running bus.

Bulbul is now undergoing treatment at a local clinic.

When contacted Laxmipur Police Super Irfan Ali Khan admitted the fact.

Local people said muslemen of Laxmipur Poura Chairman Abu Taher are responsible for the attack.

Attempt on life of journalist in Laxmipur

FENI, Oct 6: A journalist of Laxmipur district was seriously injured when a group of terrorists made an attempt on his life today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the terrorists, allegedly belonging to ruling party, attacked Staff Reporter of the daily Prothom Alo Ekramul Huq Bulbul in the morning.

The gang severely beat him up and tried to shoot him, but he managed to escape the attempt on his life getting into a running bus.

Bulbul is now undergoing treatment at a local clinic.

When contacted Laxmipur Police Super Irfan Ali Khan admitted the fact.

Local people said muslemen of Laxmipur Poura Chairman Abu Taher are responsible for the attack.

Young man shot dead in city

By Staff Correspondent
Miscreants shot dead a young man inside Kalabagan staff quarters in the city's Dhamondi area early morning yesterday.

Zahirul Islam Sharif, 20, was shot in his chest at about 5:30 am when he was on his way to a mosque located inside the staff quarter for prayers. When he arrived in front of House number 3, a bullet hit him in the chest, killing him on the spot.

Zahir, a student of class ten of Sukrabad School, was well-behaved and he was not involved in any anti-social activities," police said.

He might have been caught in a crossfire of two rival groups or could have been mistaken for a rival by criminals, local people said.

Police recovered the body of the student and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy. Police could find the reason behind the killing immediately.

The victim's father Nur Nabi, an employee of PWD, filed a case with Dhamondi police accusing unidentified people.

BR to lease out commercial activities of 29 more trains

By Raziur Rahman

Bangladesh Railway has planned to lease out to private sector commercial activities of 29 more trains in another 13 routes because of its 'success' in such venture earlier, BR sources said.

Previously, BR had leased out commercial activities of 21 trains in 11 routes and it led to a 'remarkable increase' in its income in those routes.

BR carries about 36 million passengers in different routes in the country annually and it started involving private sector in this field in July 1997. First it leased out commercial activities of one train in Dhaka-Narayanganj route on an experimental basis and gradually that of nine more trains in the route.

The monthly income of those trains rose to Tk 8.51 lakh on an average from Tk 2.92 lakh after those were 'licensed out', the sources pointed out.

Besides, commercial activities of 11 trains in 10 routes were licensed out to private sector from February last year to May this year. While BR is operating on loss, all the trains in the 11 routes are making good profit," a railway official said.

The following is an estimate of BR's earning from some of the trains before and after the lease:

Train	Route	Monthly earning before leasing out	Monthly earning after leasing out
Titas Commuter	Dhaka-B'Baria	15 lakh	20.74 lakh
Surma Mail	Dhaka-Sylhet	7 lakh	9.63 lakh
Balaka Express	Dhaka-Mymensing	7.5 lakh	11.70 lakh
Padmaragh Express	Santahar-Lalmonirhat	1.74 lakh	9.78 lakh
481/482 Local	Santahar-Lalmonirhat	3 lakh	7.62 lakh
Rocket Express	Kulna-Parbatipur	8.40 lakh	14.40 lakh
Chilahati Express	Parbatipur-Chilahati	1.35 lakh	3.60 lakh
Uttara Express	Rajshahi-Parbatipur	5 lakh	15.30 lakh

BR has so far involved private sector in commercial activities like ticket selling, ticket checking and cleaning of compartments of local and mail trains.

Private sector has also been given responsibility of 'on board' catering services in five inter-city trains so far and such services in two more inter-city trains would be given handed over to private sector shortly, an official said.

"Not only increase in income, satisfaction and comfort of passengers are also prompting BR to involve private sector in more routes," he said.

Of the 29 trains now under BR's privatisation plan, 20 pairs are in seven routes in its East zone and nine in its West zone.

When contacted, a high official of BR admitted that 'dishonesty and corruption' of BR men were responsible for poor earning in these routes.

According to the news scan database report of January-June this year by Transparency International Bangladesh, BR is the 'most corrupt department in the communication sector.'

The following is an estimate of BR's earning from some of the trains before and after the lease:

Train	Route	Monthly earning before leasing out	Monthly earning after leasing out
Titas Commuter	Dhaka-B'Baria	15 lakh	20.74 lakh
Surma Mail	Dhaka-Sylhet	7 lakh	9.63 lakh
Balaka Express	Dhaka-Mymensing	7.5 lakh	11.70 lakh
Padmaragh Express	Sant		