

BTV goes satellite today

Prime minister to open transmission at 7 this evening

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Bangladesh Television (BTB), renamed BTV World, launches its satellite transmission today, after a delay of over three months.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the transmission from Rampura Television Centre at 7:00pm, BTV Director General Mustafizur Rahman said.

The inauguration will be followed by a cultural show BTV will broadcast live from 7:00pm to 8:30pm, Rahman told Star City.

BTV planned to go on satellite transmission on December 25, 2003 but put it off to April 11 as it missed several deadlines because of technical setbacks.

According to a contract, BTV will have to pay a yearly rent of Tk 1.75 crore to AsiaSat 3 for 24-hour satellite transmission. An earth uplink station and other equipment have been installed at a cost of Tk 3.75 crore.

BTV will use the Band C of AsiaSat 3 satellite that covers New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Asia, Middle East, Western

Europe and CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries.

"People in those regions will be able to watch BTV World. We are going on air with our canned programmes to start with ...



programmes," he said.

BTV will gain ground on Bangla-speaking viewers in other countries, but Bangalees overseas are not able to watch all Bangladeshi satellite channels because of

7:00am to 9:30am and the second from 12:00 noon to 12 midnight. For satellite transmission, the programme department will have to fill a 9:30-hour slot to carry on 24 hours.

The programme department planned to fill the slot with 'canned programmes' from the BTV archive, new programmes and updates of English and Bangla bulletins.

BTV will transmit the programmes of terrestrial transmission from 7:00am to 9:00am, a mix of new and old canned programmes from 9:00am to 12:00 midnight, including band music, folk songs, drama and other entertainment programmes, and archived programmes from 12:00 midnight to 7:00am.

The schedule will be different on Friday when BTV will continue terrestrial and satellite transmissions from 7:00am to 12:00 noon, satellite transmission from 12:00 noon to 3:00pm, terrestrial programmes from 3:00pm to 12:00 midnight and satellite transmission from 12:00 midnight to 7:00am.

but we will design a slot for new programmes in phases," Rahman said.

"We are understaffed and run short of technical facilities like camera and editing panels for satellite transmission ... all are now engaged in terrestrial

government policy, cable operators' interest and technical problems. "We plan to produce programmes in English for the international audience," the DG said.

BTV continues terrestrial transmission 14:30 hours, with the first run from



GET SET, GO: Bangladesh Television center at Rampura renamed BTV World and (left, inset) test transmission.



Most of the level crossings create serious traffic jam.

Overpasses for vehicles at level crossings planned

SULTANA RAHMAN

Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) plans to introduce 'partial grade separations' to all vehicles other than trains to ease traffic jam at level crossings.

Experts say partial grade separation -- uneven crossing of roads and railroads requiring an overpass -- contradicts the strategic transport planning (STP) of the DTCB, which was laid out as a comprehensive traffic system for 20 years.

Partial grade separation usually applies to bridges for trains to cross near level crossings, but the DTCB is thinking of building the bridges for other vehicles. The experts say the plan may not be feasible.

According to Bangladesh

Railway, the city is home to about 20 rail crossings including Khilgaon, Malibagh, Maghbazar, FDC, Tejgaon, Mohakhali and Kachukhet.

As many as 72 trains shuttle in and out of Kamalapur Railway Station day -- each taking up to five minutes to pass a rail crossing and creating gridlock on the road.

"Initially, we are thinking of constructing bridges over 12 crossings that remain jammed with traffic most of the time," a DTCB official said.

"Rail crossings increase traffic congestion. Although city dwellers don't commute in the city by train, they face traffic jam every day because of it," DTCB Executive Director Quamrul Islam Siddique said.

"We are waiting for survey teams to come up with a set of

recommendations," he said.

A few years ago, the communications ministry carried out a study to remove the rail crossings from the heart of the city to minimise traffic congestion in a plan, which was shelved later.

The experts say if the partial grade separation project is implemented, the city will become a 'zigzag city' as the rail crossings are close to each other.

The distance from the FDC rail crossing to Magbazar crossing is

hardly a quarter of a kilometre and building two bridges less than 250 metres apart will add to visual pollution.

A traffic expert asking not to be named says: "The DTCB should think of a long-term solution. The STP considers elevated expressways, flyovers and monorails to cut traffic jam. Partial grade separation

is a contradiction to the STP."

"If the DTCB constructs partial grade separations now, it will have to demolish the bridges to implement the STP."

Dr Shamsul Hoque, chairman of the Traffic Engineering Department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, told Star City that the STP considered all avenues for a better traffic system.

"The grade separation for all vehicles other than trains may not be a permanent solution," he said.

DTCB officials said railway bridges are costlier than the bridges for other vehicles including bus, autorickshaw, car and truck.

"The project is in its early stages. We will think of a better option after the feasibility study is complete," DTCB's executive director said.

MAIDEN FURNITURE FAIR

A three-day maiden International Furniture Fair is being held at the Winter Garden of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Triune Exhibition and Event Management Services (TEEMS) is the lead organiser and sponsor while BAFOA the co-organiser. Partex is associated as the event partner. Twenty-five leading companies are taking part in the fair that concludes today.



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN