

Cable TV viewers are still missing pay channels

ERSHAD KAMOL

As the tug of war between two local distributors of pay channels is still going on, the cable TV viewers in most parts of the city have been missing the popular pay channels for the last two months. But the operators have not reduced the monthly line rent.

The agents--MGH Group and Nationwide Communications Limited--locked in the dispute in early October following arrest of several cable TV operators in connection with a case filed with Tejgaon Police Station.

The subscribers and the Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh (Coab) want an immediate solution to the dispute but the two agents stick to their stances and seem to have no headache about the subscribers' demand.

The viewers are deprived of the channels including Star Plus, Star Movies, Star News, Star World, National Geography, The History Channel and Sky News

distributed by MGH Group and Sony, Zee TV, Zee Cinema, Alpha Bangla, Discovery, AXN, Star Sports, Ten Sports and ESPN distributed by Nationwide Communications Limited.

The subscribers have to pay the full line rent for cable TV connection although the operators have refrained from providing the popular channels.

"We are missing many channels for the last few weeks. We cannot watch our favourite programmes on these channels. Still, the operators are not decreasing the line rent," said Pavel Rahman, a subscriber of Paltan area.

The officials of Star TV Network and Total Sports (ESPN) visited Dhaka recently but they failed to resolve the crisis.

An operator in Paltan area on condition of anonymity said: "We are in deep trouble. The problem began on October 3, when police arrested a few cable operators. We and the viewers are the victims of the dispute which is still unresolved."

M Nazrul Islam, a director of Dhaka East Cable Vision (DECV), said, "Both the groups (MGH and Nationwide) are forcing us to take a side and subscribe the pay channel package they offer. But we choose the package considering the subscribers' demand."

"In my locality sports channels have a great demand. That is why we are operating the pay channels distributed by the Nationwide Communications. And being forced by the distributor, we are not operating any channels of Star TV Network," he added.

Asked why they are not reducing the line rent, Nazrul said, "As soon as the problem is solved, we will operate all the pay channels. I agree that the viewers are the losers, but we are also. We cannot do a business with loss."

SM Anwar Parvez, president of Coab said, "If the problem continues, we will give an announcement of reducing line rent. But still we hope we will be able to operate all the pay channels. We want an immediate



Viewers nowadays watch whatever the cable operators offer.

solution to the dispute."

However, a few operators have reduced the line rent. Arif M

Syed, who is the owner of Dhaka Cable Vision that covers part of Dhanmondi area said, "We are

not operating Star TV channels and we have reduced line rent by Tk50."

BRIDAL FESTIVAL

All things Bright and Beautiful

SIMIN SAIFUDDIN

Weddings have become the single most visible expression of one's social standing and wealth, said Law Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed, at the inauguration of a 3-day 'Bridal Festival & Jewellery Exhibition with Expo 2005' on December 2.

He added that they are an intrinsic part of life, especially in our socio-religious and family-oriented culture.

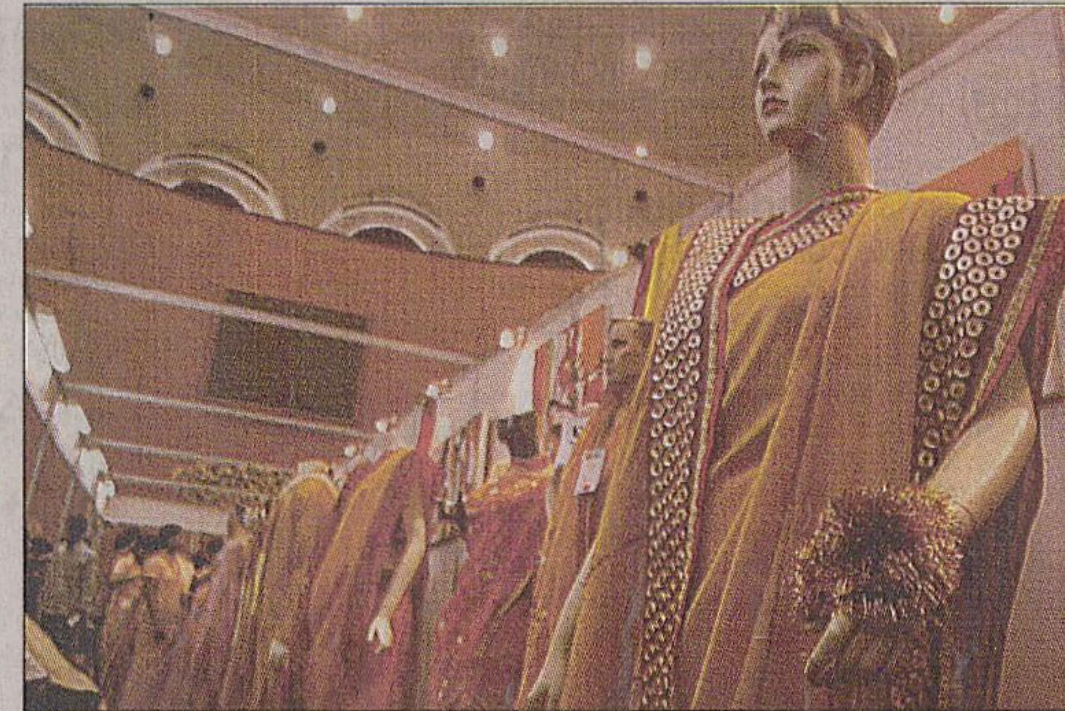
The exhibition was organised by Mirror, a monthly local fashion magazine at the Plenary Hall of the Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre.

Festivity filled the air of the venue as the stylishly decorated stalls exhibited all items involved in a wedding--from the invitation card printers, jewellery stalls by Apn Jewellers, Dia Gold, Arabians, displaying engagement and wedding rings and intricate gold ornaments.

From the plethora of established and emerging boutiques, saree and leather goods shops, like Dressy Dale, Rupahali, Khan Brothers, MATI, to name a few, to decorators, like Ikebana, Polestora, and Divine and caterers with mouth watering dishes.



Beauticians like Women's World, La Femme, Rapunzel Day Spa and Beauty Studio and cosmetic companies, to well-known and prodigious portrait photographers, like Iqbal Ahmed, promising to capture the most wonderful wedding moments every step of the way were at arms length.



Bridal exhibits at the show.

Pan Supari and Premium Sweets waited to tantalise visitor's taste buds!

The venue hustled and bustled with visitors scurrying jotting down phone numbers, collecting visiting cards and brochures, with a feeling elated as free benefits and discounts poured in.

La Femme offered free makeover on the last two days of the fair, while Women's World offered free skin tests and mehendi applications. Hertz offered rental of a brand new Mercedes Benz with a Tk. 3,000 slash on its regular rates, and coupons enticing visitors to win prizes of 10, 25 and 50

percent discounts.

Managing Editor and Publisher of Mirror, Shajahan Bhuiyan Razu, considers the prospect of a 'one-stop shop' where prospective brides and grooms, and their families, could browse in air-conditioned comfort.

The idea was to rule out the

hassles of organising a wedding.

"I visited the bridal exhibition 'Celebrating Vivaha', at the Hotel Taj in Delhi and wondered, why not in Bangladesh?" said Shajahan.

The response has been phenomenal. Last year's show, arranged within seven days, had 20 participating companies with 35 stalls, and attracted 5,000 people a day.

This year, the number of participants in the exhibition has increased to 43, with 85 stalls in total, attracting over 6,000 visitors daily.

"Such wedding exhibitions 'sure beats driving to different corners of the city to buy flowers, order invitations, and get your outfits made,' said Shehzeen, a 24-year-old bride-to-be.

Stall owners said they receive a good response from visitors at such exhibitions and it helps to garner a stronger clientele base, which is a terrific offshoot.

Besides that, the exhibition has also turned into a platform for upcoming talents in the industry.

The exhibition ended yesterday on a grand note with an award giving ceremony, fashion show and dinner to round it all.

50 years of Bangla Academy

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

The Bangla Academy, that emerged from the spirit of the strenuous struggle of the Language Movement to establish Bangla as the mother tongue will celebrate its Golden Jubilee (1955-2005) with a three-day festival from December 3 to 5.

The authorities of the academy said that till January 2005, more than 4,410 texts, reference books and magazines had been published.

The national academy devotes itself to the development of language, literature and culture.

"We have done intensive research on folklore, language, literature, culture and issues relating to Bangla," said Murshid Anwar, assistant director, department of co-ordination and pub-

lic relations, Bangla Academy. "But to expand our work we need a lot of aid and support from both the state and private organisations," he headed.

He further said joint collaborations between the academy and foreign and local agencies and organisations will portray the academy's operations globally, giving it due recognition.

One official said that seminars, symposiums, workshops with language researchers should be held. Guests to the Academy demanded the collection of information from memories of eminent personalities and produce documentaries and audiovisual programmes.

These programmes, he said, will help the new generation to understand the origin of such an academy. Another said that students of local universities should collabo-

rate with research carried on giving them an opportunity to learn many things left unsaid.

"We brought the academy as far as 50 years, but we want to take it further," added Murshid Anwar.

Academy sources said that textbooks not been updated/revised in a long time.

Selina Hossain, ex-director of the Academy and an eminent writer said that over the past 50 years the institution contributed much to the research of Bangla Language. The dictionary, popularly known as the Bangla Obhidan was one of the most mentionable outcomes.

But according to a very senior official a crisis prevails with the Bangla Academy dictionary, which is not timely updated along with updated versions of Rokeya and Nazrul Rahanabali



The Bangla Academy.

and the last volume of the Bangla Science encyclopaedia, although work is complete.

"This dictionary project ranged from Bangla to English

and vice versa along with the colloquial dictionary," Selina said.

She also mentioned Folklore, the series of books on 101 subjects; events like the Ekushey Boi

Mela, the biggest congregations of writers, readers, publishers and anyone and everyone involved with books from across the country as the academy's successes.

The Bangla Academy had been of immense support to many eminent personalities. The library is rich with 500 rare manuscripts and old newspapers and magazines, which are part of the library's gigantic collection. This collection of material now contributes much to research conducted by the Academy, said Hossain.

When asked about the ongoing crisis and irregularity in updating the textbooks published by the Academy, the ex-director said: "There is certainly a shortage of funds. But if the money sold from books especially at fairs and other times is

utilised, the problem could be minimised."

When asked why there was a shortage of printed material, Dr Abul Kalam Manzur Morshed director general (DG) of the Academy said: "A large quantity of the dictionaries were bought by Unicef and therefore the shortage."

"We have however, made arrangements to fill the void and a huge volume is being printed and will be in the market very soon," Dr Abul Kalam said.

About the future?

"The Academy intends to bring out updated versions of the colloquial dictionary compiled by Dr Mohammed Shahidullah and anticipates the arrival of a new science dictionary in Bangla," said the DG.

He also said that Dhan Shaliker Deshey, a popular children's

magazine which had been stopped will be out soon once again along with Chirayoto Kishore Shahitto, which are translations of famous foreign novels.

Abul Kalam added that, if the academy had financial support from the government, it hopes to bring out a dictionary for the tribal people, whose language and culture plays a large part in the Bangla culture and heritage.

About the jubilee celebrations, he shared the same views as Selina Hossain on the achievements made along the way.

The three-day festival has been organised to mark the 50th anniversary and will constitute speeches, cultural programmes and discussion sessions on December 4 and 5 on the achievements and expectations of the Academy.

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.



"Let us sit together to find ways to combat bomb blasts and terrorism"

-- Khaleda Zia

Prime Minister

Asked various political parties and eminent personalities of the country at a public gathering, on Wednesday.

Source: The Daily Star

"Islam can not be established in such way"

-- Maulana Obaaidul Haque

Khatib of Baitul Mokarram National Mosque

Said at a munajat after Jumma prayers condemning the latest suicide bombings in the country, on Friday.

Source: The Daily Star

"Secondary education system has been reformed in secret only to destroy the education sector"

-- Md Zafar Iqbal

Professor

Told a seminar at Dhaka on the government's new plan to introduce a unitrack education system on Friday.

Source: Prothom Alo

"Foreign investment in Bangladesh is increasing despite so many bomb blasts"



-- Saifur Rahman

Finance Minister

Said at a meeting organised to exchange views at Dhaka, on Thursday.

Source: Bhorer Kagoj

"Our duty is no longer protecting only the people we also have to safeguard ourselves"

-- A police constable in Gazipur

Told reporters after suicide bombings on two consecutive days in the city killed and injured many police officers last week, on Friday.

Source: The Daily Star

"Some Islamic NGOs seem keener on building mosques than eradicating poverty"

-- Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan

State Minister, Ministry of Religious Affairs

Said at a seminar in Dhaka, on Friday.

Source: Bhorer Kagoj