

# Loudspeakers go silent, businesses face uncertainty

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

Loudspeaker rental businesses in the capital continue to suffer losses as rentals took a nosedive due to ban on political activities in the country.

When the city dwellers breathed a sigh of relief as the nuisance of blaring music or political speeches has been put on hold at least for the time being, loudspeaker businesses on the other hand cannot wait for the ban on politics to be lifted.

Many loudspeaker businesses such as Taj mic, Habib mic, Taranga mic or Call Ready mic turned into household names as these businesses have also been an integral part of our cultural festivities for over 50 years.

Such a dry spell has never been experienced by the sector in the past, said loudspeaker business owners.

"I have been in this business for around 55 years now, and I doubt if even my ancestors went through such a bad phase before," said Akhter Hossain of Taranga mic service.

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Rafiqul Islam, sales representative of Taj mike said that their current revenues are barely enough to pay the rent of the warehouses. The owner of the establishment has been paying the salaries of the technicians from his own pocket.

"As the political and social

events are our prime source of income, the prohibition on political activities has been really dire for our business. Use of loudspeakers have also been missing in different public occasions such as May Day, Pahela Baisakh and Eid-e-Miladunnabi," said Islam.

"While Waz Mehfilis and other religious events used around 18 to 20 loudspeaker before, they use only 2 to 3 loudspeakers these days," he added.

Number of public announcement service providers revealed that they

managed to rent their loudspeakers out in a handful of occasions over the last few months.

Joynal Abedin, owner of Turag mike service said that their loudspeaker has been rented out only once in the last 6 months to announce a missing child.

According to sales representatives from Taher mike services, twice they leased their loudspeaker mikes for the announcement of Janaza prayers and for a wedding ceremony.

Talking to a number of public announcement service



A mike shop in the city remains idle while a set of loudspeakers on a black taxicab announce some new government directives in the old part of the city.

providers revealed that hefty investments of around Tk 3 to Tk 6 lakhs were contributed specifically for the period of election. A number of businessmen claimed that they have become penniless after investing virtually everything

they had.

"I bought 3 new loudspeakers and around 20 coils of electrical wires to boost my public announcement system, along with an investment of around Tk 3 lakhs for the election period. Now I'm clueless

on what I am supposed to do with all these," said Joynal Abedin.

Abul Kalam Azad, owner of Taj mike believes that the situation would improve once the ban on internal political activities is lifted.

"I am optimistic that this is just a phase and we would recover our losses once the government takes off the ban on political activities. We just have to be patient till then," said Abul Kalam Azad.



The new sculpture at TSC.

## New sculpture at DU to bolster message of peace

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Teachers-Student Centre at the University of Dhaka recently added a new sculpture called Shantir Pakhi (birds of peace) to its premise.

There are eleven birds, sitting on the branches of a tree spreading the message of peace to the students of DU. Placed in the middle of the front lawn of TSC, the new feature is a sculpture by sculptor Hamiduzzam Khan.

"Bird is a symbol of peace. With the current turmoil all over the world, people are gasping for peace", said Hamiduzzaman Khan.

"What could be a better place than TSC to spread the message of peace? The place is full of young minds, eager to learn something new. My message is for them", he added.

The sculpture is 32-feet high. It took three months to finish the work. Khan used stainless steel as the media. "I wanted to use a media that would last for

years outdoors in the rough weather, which is why I chose stainless steel pipes", said Khan.

"I also wanted the sculpture to correspond with the original features of the TSC building itself", he said.

Each of the birds weighs about 35 kilograms. The sculpture weighs about 500 kilograms. Khan however, failed to disclose the total cost of the sculpture.

Currently working as a professor of sculptor, Khan has about 60 open space sculptures.

## Ramna Park dotted

FROM PAGE 21

Except those three, none of the concrete structures or tin sheds was in the original design of the committee, headed by the chief architect of the Department of Architecture.

Later on, Mirza Abbas instructed construction of four more hexagon shaped sheds including Nageswar Champa beyond knowledge of the Department of Architecture.

Assistant Chief Architect of the Department of Architecture, Novera Gauhar, who was in the technical committee and designed Ramna Park development plan, said the committee proposed and designed only three shelters in proportion with certain distance. "The three shelters were designed in the form of timber logs in harmony with nature," she said.

The technical committee comprised of architects and engineers and worked from 2003 until end of 2006.

Ideally, a park should be free of indiscriminate construction of structures, said experts.

Activities and use of a public park in the name of associations and groups are neither consistent nor desirable. But influential quarters who have link with high level of the government, manage exclusive privilege for them even at a public space.

Sub-divisional Engineer (Civil) of PWD Zillur Rahman said that the PWD has constructed around seven to eight sheds following applications of VIP park users. Different groups of park users occupy different sheds.

"Exclusive or group-wise use of park shelters is not an authorised practice," said Rahman.

Chief Architect of the Department of Architecture ASM Ismail said approved shelters in a park are meant for use of the general people. "Unauthorised shelters and exclusive group use of the authorised ones are not allowable," he said.

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