

NEWS
bytes

Hollywood eyes biggest summer box office

Hollywood is on course for its biggest ever summer box office in the US despite several high profile flops. Big budget films "The Lone Ranger", Will Smith's "After Earth" and animation "Turbo" all hugely underperformed in America. However, figures show studio films have earned \$4.1bn, close to 2011's previous high of \$4.4bn.

Sci-fi "Elysium", starring Matt Damon, topped this week's North American chart earning \$30.5m in its opening weekend. In a crowded week for new releases, Jennifer Aniston's comedy "We're The Millers" took the second slot, followed by Disney animation "Planes".

The summer flops have been offset by the success of films such as "World War Z" - which has crossed the \$500m global takings mark, and the doomsday comedy "This Is the End", which has made \$96m - three-times its budget.

Animations "Despicable Me 2" and "Monsters University" also earned huge box office numbers worldwide.

Source: BBC

It's True!



The FBI was very impressed by the accuracy in depicting criminal investigations, serial killers, and their victims in the classic crime-thriller "The Silence of the Lambs". However, they protested against Clarice discovering Buffalo Bill on her own because inexperienced agents are never sent alone on dangerous assignments. When director Jonathan Demme explained to them that he wouldn't change it because it was the movie's psychological climax, they agreed, saying that it would be the most improbable course of action of all time, never to be repeated again.

Recitation from Tagore poems

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

Bogra Lekhok Chokro recently arranged a discussion and recitation of Tagore poems on the 72nd death anniversary of the Nobel Laureate at Kazi Nazrul Islam road of Bogra town.

The discussants were advisor to the organisation and veteran poet Shibli Moktadir, as chief guest and vice president Habibullah Jewel, secretary Amir Khosru Selim, Kamrunnahar Koheli and Monzurul Imran among others, as special guests.

President of Lekhok Chokro Islam Rafiq presided over. The discussants cited the achievements and contribution of the Nobel Laureate to Bengali literature followed by a recitation of Tagore poems.

THE MASTER PAINTER
Sultan's 90th birth anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SM Sultan was born in 1923 in Masimdia, Narail district. After merely five years of schooling in Victoria Collegiate School in Narail, he joined his father to work as a mason. At one stage, he joined the Calcutta Art School but left the institute without completing his degree.

August 10 marked the 90th birth anniversary of SM Sultan.

A bohemian and mystic, Sultan's works delve deep into rural life -- especially peasants, fishermen, day labourers and their simple lives. His works articulate the lives of the working class. His works mainly focus on disadvantaged communities, but also highlight their power of unity and the struggle for power. His paintings visually narrate stories of rural households, where men and women are seen immersed in chores and farmers toiling in the fields. His figures are muscular and powerful, denoting a sense of prosperity -- a vision the artist had for rural Bengal. Sultan drew male figures influenced by the European Renaissance tradition, while his women -- buxom and curvaceous -- belong to the old Indian tradition. Tiny huts and villages are also seen in the paintings. Sultan was mainly recognised for his depiction of rural beauty and villagers.

About him, artist Samarjit Roy Chowdhury said, "Sultan was not



PHOTO COURTESY: NASIR ALI MAMUN

only a globally renowned artist but also a philanthropist. When I was admitted to Dhaka Art College (now Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka) in 1955, the college was in Segun Bagicha and Sultan lived in a tiny room behind the college. He frequently visited the institute. He always had a flute with him. In the 1950s and 1960s, I came across many articles on him in several English newspapers and journals published from West Pakistan."

Artist Syed Abdullah Khalid

said, "On a first impression at Sultan's paintings, one gets the impression of strength and vigour. His canvas is huge and denotes the harmony, simplicity and integrity of villagers. He was a good-natured secular. He had the rare ability to quickly become the centre of attention at any social and cultural gathering."

Mohammad Eunus, Professor of Graphic Design Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, said, "A bachelor and spiritualist, Sultan stayed in a bucolic environment at

Narail. He lived with an adopted family and pets. He had a great fascination for both domestic and wild animals. He liked the company of children which encouraged him to do several projects for children. He later built a mini-zoo at his home."

Sultan received the Ekushey Padak, Swadhinata Padak, Bangladesh Charu Shilpi Sangsad Padak and other prestigious awards.

The master painter died in 1994.

MEEM
marches on

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Bidya Sinha Meem has made a name for herself in the entertainment media, with her looks and talent. Equally active on TV, cinema and modeling, Meem is passing busy days.

What do you consider the most memorable moment in your career?

Meem: It would have to be when I won Lux Channel i Superstar. It was a sudden decision to participate in it, but I emerged as the best. It was truly amazing.

Tell us about your experience of your debut film "Amar Achhe Jol".

Meem: It was a marvelous opportunity to work with a stalwart of the stature of Humayun Ahmed. I was mesmerized by the script; the shooting itself taught me a lot too.

Who are the people you have the closest bonds with?

Meem: My mother; she accompanies me wherever I go, and I share my weal and woes with my mother. I'm also very tightly-wound to my father.

Favourite place to be?

Meem: Comilla, my native village. Sadly, I don't get to visit it as often as I want, because of my schedule, but my heart is always there.

Tell us about your upcoming projects.

Meem: Recently, I have worked in two films-- "Jonakir Alo" and "Poddo Pata'r Jol". I'm looking forward to the release of both of them.

You've also authored a couple of books. Tell us about it.

Meem: It's hard to find time for writing. I did publish two novels from "Shabdo Shilpo" this year. I am hoping another hopeful of publishing another book fair.

What has you occurred?

Meem: I went through a different and hope the audience enjoyed it. I did a Eid special worked on characters, audience it.



PHOTO: ATLA AKASH



Traditional boat race in Tangail

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Signa Samaj Kalyan Jubo Sangha, a youth organisation, arranged a lively traditional boat race at local Kuamri Bil recently. Around 50 boats of varied sizes from several upazilas in the district took part in the competition in four categories.

Amir Hossain and his team from Kalihati bagged the first position in 50 malla (boatmen) category while the teams of Fazlul Haque Bir Protik of Ghatail upazila and Abdul Karim of Kalihati came in second and third respectively.

The winners in the other categories too had much to celebrate.

Upazila Parishad Chairman in Kalihati, Hasan Imam Khan distributed prizes among winners as the chief guest. Convener of the programme, Mir Kaiser Sadik Sajib, delivered the welcome speech.

The event was supported by Walton, Cute Cosmetics and Bangladesh Rowing Federation.

Subochon Nirbashoney staged in the US



Obaidullah Al Zakir (2-L) and Momtazuddin Ahmed (C) seen with guests at the programme.

A CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Association Houston recently staged "Subachon Nirbashane" ("Good sayings in Exile") in Houston, USA. Production of the much-acclaimed play -- one of the most-staged plays in Bangladesh, written by eminent playwright Abdullah Al Mamun, was directed by his nephew Obaidullah Al Zakir.

"Subachon Nirbashane" has an unusual theme; the pitfalls of an idealistic and principled existence. The curtain rises on a courtroom. The accused is an old father -- a staunch idealist and a schoolmaster. His eldest son Khokon, brought up on his father's lofty ideals, thwarted and defeated by life at every turn, points an accusing finger at him. His younger son Topon finds his father's idealism hollow and meaningless, gives up studies and turns into a hijacker. But happiness eludes him too. The last complainant is the daughter Ranu. Armed with her father's high idealism, she dreams of a happy home. But her dreams are shattered, and her idealism proved worthless.

The curtain falls on the courtroom with the old father pleading guilty to leading an ideal life; he asks for punishment. The judge calls upon the audiences to pass their verdict on him.

ALL TIME GREATS

When Beatlemania swept the world

KAVITA, New Delhi

The legendary Beatles set the world afire in the 1960s. It wasn't just the West that succumbed to Beatlemania. A new book by Leslie Woodhead, "How the Beatles Rocked The Kremlin: The Untold Story of a Noisy Revolution" reveals how young people in the former Soviet Union resorted to every kind of subterfuge to listen to the mop haired Liverpool Boys. A sampling of Woodhead at his witty best: "By stealth, by way of gossip and whispers, through illicit late-night broadcasts on Radio Luxembourg, the BBC and Voice of America, the kids tuned in. "Bites," they whispered. "Yeah, yeah, yeah". True blasphemy for a Communist regime that clamped down with an iron hand on what it perceived as blatant cultural invasion and dissidence of any kind.

The Iron Curtain has fallen. On May 24, 2003 Sir Paul McCartney gave a performance at Red Square, Moscow, the first at the sacrosanct venue by an ex-Beatle. President Vladimir Putin and former president Mikhail Gorbachev were in the audience. The huge crowd went wild when he belted out the famous Beatle number "Back in the U.S.S.R" with the lines "The Moscow girls make me sing and shout". Incredible.

But so was the English rock band: main songwriters John Lennon and Paul McCartney, lead guitarist George Harrison and drummer Ringo Starr. Starting off with the modest hit "Love Me Do" in September 1962 the Fab Four as led the charge of Beatlemania in Britain. By 1964 they had grabbed the US pop market as well. Although it is believed that "Please Please Me" was the Beatles' No 1 single, music commentators say that it was their next single, the love song "From Me to You" that topped the Record Retailer Chart--later the official UK Singles Chart--on May 2, 1963. And the crowds, particularly young girls, freaked out.

And so the world tuned into numbers like "Help!", "Hard Day's Night", "Ticket to Ride", "Yesterday". Their albums like "Rubber Soul", "Revolver", "Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band", "The Beatles" and "Abbey Road" too revolutionised the music scene of the 1960s.



It's hard to explain the Beatles mystique. According to some it was the simplicity of their lyrics that lent them universal appeal. Other credit their rise to their manger Brian Epstein. Whatever the explanation, there's little doubt that they preferred to do their own thing. And to add to it all were the fantasy lands they took their listeners to with songs like "Yellow Submarine", "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds", "Octopus's Garden" and "While my Guitar Gently Weeps".

It was too good to last. The band broke up in 1970. In a November 1969 interview, Paul McCartney publicly acknowledged the break. On April 1970 it was formally over. Many conflicts had arisen between the foursome. In one song after the break, Lennon openly lambasted McCartney for what he perceived as his lack of talent, while Lennon's ubiquitous wife Yoko Ono cast a long shadow on the group.

And so the amazing story came to an end.

Lennon's musical career continued to flourish after the break with hits like "Imagine", "Jealous Guy" "Stand by Me" and "Starting Over". McCartney went on to set up his own band called Wings and came up with numbers like "My Love", "Band on the Run".

Lead Guitarist Harrison and drummer Ringo Starr too went their way to establish themselves. Harrison became a prolific songwriter and singer with "My Sweet Lord", "Isn't it a Pity" and "Bangladesh". Today the only two surviving members of the group are McCartney and Starr. Lennon was killed in 1980 by a deranged Mark David Chapman and Harrison died of lung cancer in 2001.

But the legend continues. In 2004 Rolling Stone magazine published a list of the top 500 songs of all times. Twenty three songs of the Beatles figured in that list. The magazine also ranked the Beatles as the best artist of all time.