

Industry warming up to 'Pathaan' in our halls?

“The film will be released in 32 theatres. We have talked to the Film Artistes Association and they all agree with the decision”
— Anonno Mamun

ANTARA RAISA

After much speculation and controversy, Shah Rukh Khan's blockbuster comeback *Pathaan* will finally release in Bangladesh on May 12. The film received clearance from the Bangladesh Film Censor Board yesterday.

After the Information and Broadcasting Ministry green-lighted the import of 10 Hindi films this year under certain conditions, artistes and distributors weighed in with their opinions.

While hall owners and distributors are happy with the release of *Pathaan*, some artistes are still opposed to the idea of releasing Hindi films in our theatres.

Pathaan is being imported to Bangladesh by Action-Cut Entertainment. Speaking on behalf of the company, Anonno Mamun informed The Daily Star, “The film will be released in 32 theatres. We have



Finally, the release of Hindi films will save the dying single screens of our country, because now they will have enough films to run during the off-seasons,” said Nawshad.

Not everyone is pleased with this decision. Among many who raised concerns about the impact on local releases, *Jaago* famed director Khijir Hayat Khan was the most outspoken. He told the media that bringing Hindi cinema to the country would actually damage the Bangladeshi film industry.

Prior to the release of his film, Khijir Hayat Khan posted a video on his YouTube channel addressing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, about how the release of Hindi cinema in our country could damage the business of Bangladeshi cinema in theaters.

Will the near 2-month delay from the release date hamper the second coming of Shah Rukh Khan in Bangladesh? Or will die-hard fans laud SRK, Deepika and John Abraham all the same and storm halls to experience the worldwide



talked to the Film Artistes Association, and they all agree with the decision.”

“Those who are opposing the idea, I want to tell them to be patient and see what impact it will bring to our film industry. Releasing Hindi films will make the audience come back to the theaters again, and it would also make

a good impact on Bengali films too,” he added.

Star Cineplex is one of the leading multiplexes in Bangladesh. Since 2004, the multiplex has entertained audiences by releasing Hollywood and Bengali films.

“We are quite elated about the release of *Pathaan* on May 12. We have 20 screens across the country. So, we always look forward to good content that can bring the audience to the halls. In our country, we have huge demand for Bollywood films, especially Shah Rukh Khan films. So, I think this is a great initiative,” said Mesbah Uddin, Manager, Media & Marketing at Star Cineplex.

While talking about what impact it would have on our film industry, he said, “This will be a good thing for our film industry. It will create competition, which will increase the quality of Bangla films. Moreover, it will build a practice of going to cinema halls with friends and family

among the audience. Our halls will be rejuvenated.”

During this Eid ul Fitr, a total of 8 films were released in theaters. Among them, Shakib Khan starrer *Leader Amie Bangladesh*, Puja Chery starrer *Jinn*, Bubby-Ador Azad starrer *Local* and Bobby-Roshan starrer *Paap* are still going strong at the box office.

The Daily Star asked Bobby, Roshan, and Ador Azad if the release of *Pathaan* could hamper the business of their films.

Bobby thinks if Bollywood films are released in Bangladesh, then it would increase the cinema halls in our country.

“I think the quality of our Bengali films will increase if there is healthy competition in the industry. As the whole world is now in the palm of our hands, then why can't the Hindi films be released here?” she asked.

However, Bobby also requested the distributors not release Hindi films on any special occasions when our Bengali

films are released.

“There is no problem if any foreign films are released in our theaters,” said Roshan. “This Eid, the audience watched Bengali movies, overlooking Hollywood films. This proves that if Hindi movies are released, we will be fine.”

Echoing the same sentiment, actor Ador Azad is also not that worried. He thinks the government has taken a good initiative to create healthy competition in our industry.

Due to the release of eight films this Eid, more than 100 halls, that were previously closed, were reopened this year—outside the existing 60 halls in the country.

Iftexhar Uddin Nawshad, owner of Madhumita Cinema Hall, thinks that it's a very good initiative to save the single screens in our country.

“We were telling the government to let us import Hindi films for a long time because, except for special occasions, it gets difficult for us to run empty halls.



juggernaut that is *Pathaan*? While only time will reveal the actual impact of a Bollywood film in Bangladeshi halls, exciting times lie ahead.

COUNTRYWIDE



Amid the ongoing adverse weather, a farmer takes harvested Boro paddy to home. The photo was taken from Chandkathi village in Pirojpur's Nazirpur upazila.

BAD WEATHER hampering Boro harvest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Boro paddy yield in likely to fall to some extent in different upazilas of the district this year due to bad weather during the ongoing harvest period.

Meanwhile, crisis of farm labourers has added to the owes of the local farmers.

Farmers in different areas said they are facing serious trouble in harvesting their already ripe paddy in the field due to light storms accompanied by incessant rainfall for the last few days.

Growers in the region started harvesting Boro paddy around two weeks ago and expected to complete the yield within three weeks, but now it seems quite impossible to complete the process in time, they said.

“The weather was favourable at the beginning, but water kept entering his Boro field since the rain started couple of days ago,” said Animesh Halder of Chandkathi village in Nazirpur upazila.

Farmers said if ripe paddy is not harvested timely, storms lash most of the paddy sheaves to the ground.

“We do not have any other alternative option to harvest the ripe paddy as their entire area is facing serious labour crisis during the ongoing harvesting period,” another farmer Manotosh Halder said.

Due to acute crisis of labourers now one has to pay around Tk 1,000 to hire a farm worker, he said.

Meanwhile, farmers living in the low-lying areas of Nazirpur and Pirojpur Sadar upazila are the worst sufferers as paddy there ripens a bit late due to the wetland.

Pirojpur Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Deputy Director Nazrul Islam Sikder said Boro harvest is being badly hampered due to the adverse weather for the last couple of days.

Only about 30 percent harvest has been completed so far.

Availability of harvester machines would have eased the trouble of the paddy growers as farmers in the area now have to depend on day labourers, he added. According to Pirojpur DAE, Boro has been cultivated on 32,396 hectares of land this year, compared to 26,070 hectares last year.

Biman eyeing 10 Airbus planes

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items and perishable goods are shipped to different destinations every day, the official said.

“Fourteen foreign airlines operating cargo services have grabbed the market. But Biman has not been able to earn money because it does not have a cargo plane.”

Besides, the airlines offering the service are draining the country's foreign exchange, aviation insiders say.

Biman currently relies on cargo holds of passenger planes.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) in a statistics in February said that global

air cargo demand rose above pre-pandemic levels.

About the purchase of the eight passenger planes, the official said, “We have given the approval in principle as the first step. We recommended negotiating with the aircraft manufacturer in this regard. The technical review, signing of agreement and other procedures will follow.”

Biman Managing Director and CEO Shafiul Azim said the plan is to expand Biman's route to Tokyo, Rome, Male, Colombo, Chennai, Sydney, and New York.

State Minister Mahbub Ali said using Boeing and Airbus planes will not be a

problem for Biman as other large carriers use aircraft from both brands.

After becoming a public limited company in 2007, Biman spent around Tk 19,020 crore on new planes.

In 2008, Biman had inked a deal with Boeing for purchasing 10 new planes, including four 787-8s. Two more 787-9s were purchased from Boeing later.

Biman currently has four Boeing 777-300ERs, four Boeing 787-8s, two Boeing 787-9s, six Boeing 737-800s, and five De Havilland Canada DHC-8 Q400s.

Of the 21 planes, Biman owns 18 and five are leased.

Zahangir's bid

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After scrutiny on April 30, Returning Officer Faridul Islam cancelled Zahangir's nomination but validated Zaida's.

Later, Zahangir filed an appeal with the divisional commissioner challenging the decision.

The GCC election will be held on May 25. The

deadline for withdrawing candidacy is May 8.

On November 25, 2021, Zahangir was expelled from the Awami League for making derogatory comments about the martyrs of the Liberation War.

He was suspended from the post of GCC mayor on the same day.

Locals attack, injure UNO of Madhukhali

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scuffle ensued when Ansar members tried to snatch banners from the women.

Locals alleged that Ansar members hit some women with rifle butts, leaving one injured.

Incensed, locals attacked the administration team, leaving the UNO and some Ansar members injured.

Sumon Kar, additional superintendent (Madhukhali circle) of police in Faridpur, said a police team rushed to the scene and brought the situation under control.

The UNO was admitted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital in Faridpur, while the other injured were sent to Madhukhali Upazila Health Complex, said Kamrul Ahsan Talukder, deputy commissioner of Faridpur.

The UNO's car was also vandalised during the incident, Sumon Kar added. Madhukhali Upazila Assistant Commissioner (land) Shamim Ara said the Ashrayan project was being implemented using khas land.

\$3b from Korea on easy terms

FROM PAGE 1
improving the daily lives of Bangladesh people,

such as in the areas of transportation, health and education, and for enhancing friendship between the people of Bangladesh and Korea,” Jang keun added.

The repayment period of the EDCF loans will be 40 years, including a 15-year grace period. The interest rate would range from 0.01 percent to 0.05 percent, said the press release from the Korean embassy in Dhaka.

The terms appear to have become more favourable for Bangladesh at the time of putting pen to paper to the financing agreement.

In the letter of understanding signed in March, the interest rate was mentioned as 1 percent and the repayment period 30 years with a grace period of seven years, said a press release from the ERD then.

There was also a 0.4 percent management fee.

So far, two transport sector projects have been selected for funding from the latest EDCF: procurement of CNG buses and modernisation of railway signalling system.

Some 340 air-conditioned buses will be procured for the state-owned Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation under the project, said its chairman Tazul Islam.

The other project will modernise the signalling system at 20 stations on the Ishwardi to Parbatipur route at a cost of Tk 648.08 crore. Of the total project cost, Tk 475.78 crore is expected in project aid.

Both the development project proposals have been sent to the planning commission for approval. A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed on the cooperation for Dhaka MRT Line 4.

Korea has expressed interest to finance the feasibility study as well as the construction of the line, said Mohammad Abdur Rouf, company secretary of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited.

“This MOU would be furthering that interest,” he said.

According to the arrangement, candidate projects will be identified in the future in close consultation between the two governments.

The Korean government has been providing soft loans through the EDCF for the development of socioeconomic, infrastructure and ICT sectors in Bangladesh since 1993.

Already 16 projects involving \$619.78 million have been completed with assistance from the EDCF and another seven projects involving \$616.28 million are ongoing.

1 killed as steel mill furnace explodes

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were working when the furnace exploded, spilling molten iron on the bodies of at least seven workers, said Shafiqul Islam, a supervisor of the factory.

They were rushed to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery where Shankar was declared dead, he said.

The injured are Jewel, 25, Golam Rabbi, 35, Ibrahim, 35, Elias alias Yeasin, 35, Niyon, 20 and Alamgir, 33.

Jewel and Elias

sustained 97 percent burns on their bodies, Rabbi and Niyon 95 percent, Alamgir 90 percent, while Ibrahim suffered 28 percent burns on his body, hospital sources said.

The condition of all the injured workers is critical.

Inspector Mustafizur Rahman, in charge of Bhulta Police Outpost, said the factory is still under construction and they suspected that the explosion took place as the factory authorities were melting iron on a trial basis.