



PHOTOS: AFP

Multiplex magic, single-screen struggles

How much did "Pathaan" earn?

Was all the hype for Shah Rukh Khan's blockbuster comeback, "Pathaan", worth it? The Box-office figures will speak for itself, as distributors Action Cut Entertainment reveal their business earnings to The Daily Star.

ZAHID AKBAR

The much-anticipated Bollywood film *Pathaan* is experiencing a significant increase in the number of theaters screening the movie, as it enters its second week. The movie now set to run in 43 theaters starting Friday.

After its release in 41 theaters across the country, the film witnessed an impressive total of 206 shows per day on May 12. The film will continue to captivate audiences with 185 shows per day. Until then, the Shah Rukh Khan blockbuster has done business of over BDT 80 Lakhs at the box office, according to the distributors Action Cut Entertainment.

Observations from various multiplexes reveal that there is a substantial influx of visitors, particularly on holidays, generating a lively and vibrant atmosphere. However, the movie's performance on regular weekdays is also commendable, indicating sustained interest among moviegoers.

On its release day, *Pathaan* witnessed packed theaters in many multiplexes, with a strong buzz surrounding the film. The movie's popularity has continued to grow, attracting large crowds and prompting advanced ticket bookings in multiplexes such as Star Cineplex and Blockbuster Cinemas.

Anonno Mamun from Action Cut Entertainment expressed his views, stating, "The number of *Pathaan* screenings has increased in the second week. I believe that the audience in Bangladesh will continue to



enjoy the movie for a few more days. We can expect the release of more popular Bollywood films here in the future."

"The film had been released in India five months ago across various platforms. Despite being watched by the majority of the audience, the movie continues to attract audiences in the theaters," said Iftekhar Uddin Naushad, the owner of Madhumita Cinema Hall.

Naushad mentioned that the film is performing better than some Bengali movies, and managed to generate a business of approximately 3 lakhs in its first week. As a result, they decided to extend its screening into the second week, with hopes of similar result. While the cinema hall may not be completely filled, the movie's performance is still somewhat satisfactory.

Antara, who watched the movie on another platform, expressed her delight at

experiencing Shah Rukh Khan on the big screen, saying, "I can't express how wonderful it feels. I truly enjoyed the movie and Shah Rukh Khan's performance."

However, the film is not doing well at most single-screens. For instance, there are no audiences in the Ananda cinema hall, which is situated at the heart of the Farmgate area. It has been observed that among the DC section's 540 seats, only 15 viewers came to see the 12 pm screening of *Pathaan*. Apart from that, among 570 seats of general section, only 20 to 25 people came in to watch the film on Wednesday.

Two students from Titumir College informed The Daily Star of their disappointment. Mehedi and Ashraf had come to join the 12 pm showing of *Pathaan*. "We heard a lot about the film so we came to see it. But we were expecting a lot more people." Monsur, an employee of the cinema hall informed that he had been working here for a long while and is saddened at the fading excitement of the hall-goers. He also added that there aren't many "Pathaan" viewers coming in.

The release of *Pathaan* in Bangladesh ended an 8 year gap of a Hindi movie being screened in the country, and it will be interesting to see what precedent it sets for future imports of Hindi cinema. However, with many rules and regulations in place, including the barring of release on festivals alongside local movies, it will be an uphill battle for most films.

Johnny Depp on Cannes comeback: I didn't go anywhere



Johnny Depp pushed back at suggestions he was making a comeback with the Cannes Film Festival's opening movie *Jeanne du Barry* following a high-profile defamation trial a year ago, though he admitted people had "stopped calling" at the time.

"I keep wondering about the word comeback, because I didn't go anywhere," Depp said after arriving 45 minutes later than scheduled at the news conference for the film on Wednesday.

Jeanne du Barry, in which Depp plays King Louis XV, received a seven-minute standing ovation at the luxurious Grand Theatre Lumiere, where it premiered on Tuesday evening.

Tickets for Anuv Jain concert sold out

In recent times, there has been a lot of hype surrounding the *Let's Vibe Dhaka with Anuv Jain*, with audiences rushing to buy tickets for the event. Now, Adventor Communications has confirmed that tickets for the concert featuring the young Indian singer, lyricist and composer have sold out in just a week's time.

Anuv Jain is scheduled to perform at the International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB) on June 1. Aside from him, Bangladesh's Tahsan, Pritom Hasan and Xefar will also be performing at the event.



COUNTRYWIDE



Kattu Mia, a small tea farmer, takes care of his tea garden at Keshba village in Nilphamari's Kishoreganj upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Northern region sees record tea production

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The country's northern region has registered a record 17.78 million kilogram of tea production in the recently concluded 2022 season, according to state-run Bangladesh Tea Board (BTB).

Amir Hossain, development officer at BTB's Panchagarh regional office, said the country's five northern districts have produced a total of 17.78 million kilogram of tea in 2022, which is 3.32 million kilogram higher, compared to 14.46 million kilogram in 2021.

He also informed that there are nine registered and 21 unregistered tea gardens in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari.

Moreover, there are another 8,335 small plots, which belong to local tea farmers.

The total amount of tea produced in the north accounted for 19 percent of the country's total tea production.

In the recently concluded season, a total of 17.78 million kilogram of tea were produced from 90.03 million kilogram of green tea leaves, processed in 22 tea processing factories in the northern region, Amir said.

Abdul Hamid, a tea farmer from Nilphamari, said they are gradually

leaning towards tea cultivation as it is more profitable than the other crops like paddy, potato, maize and pulses.

The tea plants start yielding green leaves within 3 to 4 years of plantation and continues for another 35 to 40 years with a little care and less expenses.

Zayed Imam Siddiqui, senior farm assistant at Panchagarh regional office of BTB, said last year farmers in five northern districts have brought an additional 645.12 acres of land under tea cultivation, expanding the total tea cultivation area to 12,079 acres in the region.

Tea cultivation began to flourish in the north in 1996, following a visit by the then Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina, who instructed to go for experimental tea farming in plain land.

Later, a few companies like Kazi & Kazi Tea Company, Karotoa Tea Company and some other firms started to purchase land for commercial tea production.

At the same time, some local farmers also started tea cultivation in small scale, setting a new height in tea industry. Contacted, BTB Chairman Major General Mohammad Ashraf Islam ndc, psc said the country's northern region has emerged as the second largest tea producing area after Sylhet.

Won't join graft probe

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In a statement addressed to the NAB's deputy director, and shown to Reuters by one of Khan's lawyers, the former prime minister called the allegations against him "absolutely false, frivolous and concocted".

He said he was in the process of applying for, and obtaining, bail in a number of other legal cases and would not be available before his protective bail expired on May 22.

On Wednesday, Khan said that police had surrounded his house in Lahore, in Punjab province, and that he expected to be re-arrested soon, after the government warned him to hand over supporters who it blamed for attacks on the

army, reports Reuters.

Punjab's Information Minister Amir Mir said the government did not have any plans to arrest Khan as he had been given bail by court. "All we want him to hand over the terrorists hiding at his home," he said.

Khan has said authorities could search his home but only with legal warrants from a court, and has denied sheltering anyone involved in the violence.

Yesterday, Khan's aide Iftikhar Durrani allowed journalists into some areas of Khan's Zaman Park residence to "look for terrorists".

Speaking to Deutsche Welle in his first interview since the lapse of the Punjab government's 24-

hour deadline for his party to hand over "terrorists" allegedly taking refuge at his house, Khan said police were still surrounding his residence but not in as large a number as Wednesday's night.

He reiterated that he expects to be re-arrested, saying "it could happen any time". The Punjab police claimed to have arrested eight persons who tried to flee Khan's residence, reports Dawn online.

While talking to journalists at his residence, Khan said: "There is a plan formed to pit the PTI against the army... their plan is to eliminate the PTI through the army."

"The PDM is behind this and it is very dangerous for the country," he said.

Law enforcers for throttling

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fair polls. "We have assured them of performing our duties as per the directive of the Election Commission."

About the allegation of police favouring some candidates, the IGP said, "I don't think so. We have been performing election duties for many years following the law."

Several sources attended the meeting told this newspaper that more than one representative of law enforcement agencies proposed throttling the internet speed, citing that it would be helpful for

them to maintain law and order as well as contain the spread of rumors.

They said, "In the meeting, the chief election commissioner said throttling internet speed will raise questions at home and abroad."

The EC advised the law enforcement agencies to take steps to stop the spread of rumors on social media so that no disinformation is spread.

According to the sources, the commission said the image of the commission as well as the administration and the law enforcement agencies

should be upheld by ensuring that voters cast their votes freely.

In the meeting, the EC also asked the law enforcers to take measures so that the recurrence of irregularities in Gaibandha-5 by-polls does not take place.

The EC held the meeting with secretaries of several ministries and top officials of Rab, BGB, Coast Guard, NSI and others.

Elections to Gazipur City Corporation will be held on May 25, Khulna and Barishal city corporations on June 12 and Rajshahi and Sylhet city corporations on June 21.

Car carrying Zahangir

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...They threw brick chunks at me and my mother," he said.

Despite repeated attempt, Azmat Ullah could not be reached for comment.

Ashrafal Islam, officer-in-charge of Tongi East

Police Station, said, "I have heard that there was an attack. No candidate filed any written complaint yet."

"If we receive complaints, we will take action after investigation," he said.

The OC said a candidate has to inform the police

station concerned 24 hours before holding any public meeting. But they did not do so.

Zahangir nomination was cancelled by the Election Commission during scrutiny. He was expelled from AL on May 15.

BNP looks

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"It would be tough to get the leaders and activists to make the anti government programmes successful if the government repression continues and we fail to launch the final phase of the movement soon," said a senior leader, wishing not to be named.

Another BNP leader said, "Through this movement, we will identify the weaknesses within. We can't fail. It is a matter of our existence... And that's why senior leaders were given the responsibility of each of the rallies at district levels."

The leader said the dates of the rallies would be bunched together in four groups.

The rallies would continue until the end of June and then the BNP would announce the programmes for its final phase demanding elections under a non-partisan interim government.

July was chosen since

there would be a pause in the movement during Eid-ul-Azha.

However, Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party, told The Daily Star yesterday, "It is tough to say when the final phase of movement will start. It depends on many things including the intensity of the movement and the reaction of the government. Let's see how the government reacts and how we can take our movement forward. But this time we don't have any other option except compelling the government to accept our demand."

The party plans to leverage people's frustration and anger over price hikes of essentials and the high cost of living and get the backing of local and international communities.

Fakhru said movements that have been successful in the past were based on issues of the people.

They get better security

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sought their support for Bangladesh's candidate - Captain Moin Ahmed, former director general of London's International Maritime Mobile Satellite Organization - vying for the post of the IMO's secretary general in its upcoming July election.

Asked if the prime minister's remarks that nothing would be purchased from countries that impose sanctions on Bangladesh would have implications, he said, "There will be no impact on trade and business in this regard."

He, however, did not elaborate.

He added, "We are a

strong state partner [of the US] and respect each other's policies. We are in constant engagement and this will take our relationship forward. If there are changes, we will let you know."

Asked if the PM's remark about the US is a political rhetoric, Shahriar said he has no capacity to analyse her remarks.

"Our prime minister has been through experiences that we never faced... The killing of her family members... She walked from door to door and still didn't get justice. We don't know what she went through," he said.