



Hall owners face huge losses, look to recoup with ‘Toofan’



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

It seemed like silver-screen cinema was finally back, when ‘Toofan’ started breaking all records for a Bangladeshi film. However, the unforeseen situation has seemed to put a halt to that.

SAHID AKBAR

Irrespective of whether it was on single-screens or multiplexes, Shakib Khan starrer *Toofan* was doing incredible business in cinema halls after its release this Eid-ul Azha. The Raihan Rafi directorial was expected to run for the foreseeable future before the quota reform protests started. According to the producers, the film earned around Tk 25 crores, a rare feat for a Bangladeshi film. Even though some people did go see the film at the start



of the movement, cinema halls had to close down after nationwide violence started, claiming the lives of many involved. In the past few years, films like *Hawa*, *Poran* and *Priyotoma* showed that there is still promise for Bangladeshi films, and if done right, it can pull people to cinema halls despite the dominance of OTT. Hall owners now are facing considerable losses during the current curfew, as noted by Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, senior manager at Star Cineplex, the country's biggest multiplex chain. “We were running 46 shows of *Toofan*, it was doing really well for us,” he said. “However, we had to close down. It is unfortunate, as no film in recent memory made as many records as this film – and now, we are facing huge losses which will be hard to recoup if we have to keep the halls closed for a few more days.”

Iftekhar Uddin Nawshad, owner of Madhumita Cinema, is distraught at the situation. “After a huge gap, we started seeing good business with *Toofan* – the timing of closure could not have been more unfortunate. I do understand that this is a national emergency, but so many lives depend on our business as well. What I can tell you is after the situation is better, we will run the film again to attract people to our halls. Shyamoli Cinema’s Ahsanullah also echoed the same sentiment, “We had to keep our hall closed from July 19 onwards, was it even possible to run films in this situation? Thanks to Shakib Khan, we finally started seeing profitable days, but that has been upended by the nationwide violence. We hope to keep *Toofan* running after the situation gets better.”

‘Sitting at home, hoping for normalcy’



Chanchal Chowdhury was in the USA when the quota reform movement started in Bangladesh. However, the actor had no idea that it would lead to so much violence. He is now at home, hoping for the situation to return to normal. “I am shocked at the amount of violence that has ensued, must there have been bloodshed?”, he said. “I am now obeying the rules of the curfew, and I can only hope that we can once again see normalcy in our beloved country.”

Chirkutt’s Dhaka return delayed amidst protests

Known as Bangladesh’s ‘international’ act, Chirkutt was on its Canada tour for the past month, and was supposed to return to Dhaka on July 20. However, the band’s flight has been delayed, amidst continued violence. “We are horrified to learn about the situation in our beloved country,” said Pavel, the band’s drummer. “We are all praying that we can all get through this together.” The band hopes to return as soon as it is safer to land in Dhaka.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

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