

# Television thrives amidst internet outage CAN IT KEEP ITS VIEWERS?

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

**"After almost five years, our family came together to watch television during the internet outage. It was fun, and reminded us of the old times when we used to watch cable TV together," said Parul, who works as a nurse at a private hospital.**

This sentiment resonated across the country as people left their mobile phones to watch their TV screens for a change.

My brain, accustomed to surfing the internet all day, found peace in switching channels with my trusty old friend, the remote control. After watching piles of excruciating news about the rampage and ruins of our country, I found an escape in funny serials and old Bangla movies on TV.

Amid the chaos, I found solace in Deepo TV's popular drama *Bokulpur* and Gaan Bangla's musical programme *Wind of Change*. Then it struck me—what had happened to television? Why did it lose its charm? Will it be able to sustain the sudden rise in TV ratings with quality content?

Curious, I asked my Gen-Z cousin for her



ILLUSTRATION: DOWEL BISWAS

Sales and Marketing at Channel i.

Alfred Kokhon, head of programs at NTV, shared a similar sentiment. He stated, "We have both television and an OTT platform. However, we always air the latest episodes first on our channel. But since the audience has options, viewership gets distributed. When there was no online option, everything was centralised on TV. If television starts producing quality content that caters to our local audiences' tastes, viewers will surely watch it."

To be fair, television channels could not have predicted the situation and instantly formulated a plan to keep its sudden viewership. "We are going through a crisis period right now, and sticking with scheduled content for the time being. However, we are hopeful that once we get through this, we will come up with ideas to draw audiences back to television," said Ibn Hasan.

While the internet was down, TV ratings skyrocketed. Most TV channels have confirmed that their ratings have doubled, although they couldn't provide actual figures as data couldn't be gathered physically. How did they assume their content was reaching the audience? The answer lies in the constant stream of advertisement breaks.

"The viewership of our series is also increasing. Many people are watching our series *Ghorer Shotru Bivishon* and *Jonakir Alo*. Increased viewership means more advertisements for NTV. With online platforms still temporarily off, people are turning to television. When sponsors are eager to place ads on our content, it confirms that viewers are watching it more," said Alfred Kokhon.

While other channels are airing old series and reruns of previous episodes, Deepo TV is committed to highlighting new episodes for their viewers.

"We could have showcased repeats of old episodes of our popular series, but we didn't. We don't want to bank episodes; instead, we aim to show fresh episodes to our viewers. If we run out of episodes, we have decided to ensure pick-and-drop service for our artistes so that they can film safely. This initiative is our effort to retain our audience. We are confident that this approach will help retain a small percentage of our viewers," said COO Subarna Parvin of Deepo TV.

Deepo TV, known for its series-based content, saw a significant increase in viewership during the internet outage. Their dramas "Mashrafe Junior," "Bokulpur," and "Dena Pawna" have a massive fanbase that grew even larger during this period.

Recently, Channel i's tele-fiction "Tithidur" has been praised for raising awareness about depression in adults. The channel also enjoys a dedicated fanbase with its "Punorjorno" series. Ibn Hasan Khan of Channel i is confident that the popularity of television will sustain in the long run against OTT platforms.

"Although the popularity of this medium is increasing, it still hasn't fully taken away the charm of television. The reason is that only a certain sector of people is connected to digital media, while a large number of people still watch television. Television still has a significant scope to attract an audience by offering good content," added Ibn Hasan.

While it's true that the popularity of OTT.



ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

take on television content. "I think I'm going to lose my mind if I have to stay without the internet. I can't stand those cringe Bangla movies and slapstick comedies anymore," said Zaira.

"Television channel owners should have considered people's tastes and taken digital media as a strong competitor to produce quality programmes. Unfortunately, they failed to meet expectations, leading to a decline in viewership," said Ibn Hasan Khan, director of

## Lady Gaga alters breathing technique to sing in 'Joker 2'



Lady Gaga is all set to feature a different vocal style, for her rendition of the DC character Harley "Lee" Quinn in the Todd Phillips directorial film *Joker: Folie à Deux*, also starring Joaquin Phoenix.

The Grammy and Oscar-winning artiste told *Empire* magazine that her portrayal of the iconic character from *Batman: The Animated Series* will showcase a new talent in the musical.

She explained, "I focused intensely on changing my usual breathing techniques to sing in a way that comes from Lee, rather than from the artiste people know me as."

"There are quite a few off-key moments in my singing as Lee because she wouldn't know that as a classically trained vocalist, I control my breathing to stay on pitch and maintain rhythm. For Lee, I let go of these technical elements, setting aside my training to fully embrace the character."

## 'James Bond' star George Lazenby announces retirement



Australian actor George Lazenby, renowned for his portrayal of James Bond in the 1969 classic *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, has officially retired from acting. Lazenby shared his decision on the social media platform X, as reported by *Variety*.

"This hasn't been an easy decision, but it's time to announce my retirement from work. Therefore, I won't be doing any more acting or making public appearances, doing any more interviews, or signing any more autographs as of today," Lazenby posted.

The actor expressed heartfelt gratitude to his fans for their unwavering support over the years. Lazenby's tenure as the world's most famous secret agent was the shortest, starring in only one *James Bond* film. Despite this, his role left a lasting impression on the franchise.

Beyond James Bond, Lazenby appeared in other notable projects, such as *The Man from Hong Kong* (1975) and *Never Too Young to Die* (1986).

# NEWS

## Humanity suffers

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The disease is climate inaction," he stressed, calling in particular on G20 countries to take action.

While 2023 was the hottest year on record, and 2024 could set a new record, temperatures well above 40°C (104°F) are increasingly common.

In the space of a year, the 50°C threshold has been exceeded in at least 10 places, from Death Valley in the United States (53.9°C on July 7) to Agadir in Morocco, and also in China and India.

The intense heat, often less visible than other devastating impacts of climate change such as storms or floods, is nonetheless more deadly.

This "silent killer" is responsible for around 489,000 deaths per year

between 2000 and 2019, compared with 16,000 deaths per year from cyclones, according to the UN's "Call to Action" document published on Thursday.

Extremely high temperatures also have an economic impact, with the UN estimating economic losses from heat stress at work will reach \$2.4 trillion in 2030.

According to a report by the International Labor Organization published on Thursday, more than 70 percent of workers were exposed to excessive heat in 2020, 8.8 percent more than in 2000.

"The good news is that we can save lives and we can limit its impact," Guterres said Thursday.

The UN has called for the world

community to first act to protect "the most vulnerable" -- including young children, the elderly and also humanity's poorest.

In this context, early warning systems should include extreme heat, warning populations of the arrival of heat waves and informing them of the precautions to take, the document says.

The call to action also recommends an "increase (to) equitable access to and scale up (of) low-carbon cooling."

This would involve investing in passive cooling systems -- which include climate-sensitive urban design measures, reflective surfaces and natural cooling systems -- and the phase-out of climate-warming gases that are used in many cooling systems.

was fatally shot on July 18 while covering clashes in Jatrabari. Hossain, a correspondent for Daily Bhorer Awaj newspaper, was also killed on July 18 while reporting in Gazipur. Turab, a reporter for the Daily Jalalabad and Daily Naya Diganta, was killed when police allegedly fired on a procession of the BNP in northeast Sylhet city on July 19.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach said he

## 'Sabotage' hits French trains

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suspicions fell on leftist militants or environmental activists, but they said there was not yet any evidence.

The Paris prosecutor's office said the probe would be overseen by its organised crime office, with the anti-terrorist sub-directorate (SDAT), a branch of the judicial police that typically monitors hard-left, extreme-right and radical environmental groups, coordinating investigations.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal declined to speculate about the possibility of such groups being behind the sabotage.

"What we know, what we see, is that this operation was prepared, coordinated, that nerve centres were targeted, which shows a certain knowledge of the network to know where to strike," he said.

The coordinated strikes on the rail network will feed into a sense of apprehension ahead of the Olympics opening ceremony in the heart of Paris later on Friday. Operations at the Basel-Mulhouse airport on France's border with Switzerland were briefly suspended due to a bomb alert.

At the Gare de L'Est, Xavier Hiegel,

had full confidence in the French authorities.

"I don't have concerns," he told reporters at the Olympic Village.

More than 300,000 spectators are expected to line the banks of the River Seine when the athletes parade through the heart of Paris on a flotilla of barges and riverboats, part of an extravagant show that will be watched by billions.

France has deployed 45,000 police, 10,000 soldiers and 2,000 private security agents to secure the Games' opening ceremony. Snipers will be on rooftops, and drones in the air.

But while the capital is locked down for the opening ceremony, security elsewhere in the country is lighter.

The TGV high-speed rail attacks left hundreds of thousands of people stranded at stations.

Eurolink's high-speed services linking London and Paris were forced onto slower lines while Germany's Deutsche Bahn warned of disruption to long-distance services.

The SNCF urged all travelers to postpone their journeys. Repairs were underway but traffic would be severely disrupted until at least the end of the weekend.

At the Gare de L'Est, Xavier Hiegel,

39, said he was just trying to get home for the weekend and could not believe that people would want to harm the Olympics.

"The Games bring jobs so this really is nonsense. I hope the people responsible will be found and punished," he said.

The attacks hit signalling installations in the Atlantic, Northern and Eastern high-speed lines with fires set off by explosive devices, the SNCF said.

SNCF chief Jean-Pierre Farandou said some 800,000 customers had been impacted ahead of a busy weekend for French holidaymakers. Thousands of rail staff had been deployed to repair the damage.

"This attack is not a coincidence, it's an effort to destabilise France," Valerie Pecresse, president of the Paris region, told reporters.

Paris 2024 said it was working closely with the SNCF to assess the situation. The attacks will make it tougher for people travelling to Paris from other areas of France.

"It's a disaster," said Parisian Brigitte Dupont. "Today is the opening of the Olympic Games, a huge event that was supposed to be magnificent, and this is spoiling people's joy."

## 20 students sued for attack on police

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Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, also the case's investigating officer, told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to recent statements by some government high-ups, students would not be harassed for participating in the quota reform protests unless they were involved in attacks on government establishments.

This year's quota protests started on July 1 and were held peacefully till July 15, when Chhatra League activists attacked quota protesters on the Dhaka University campus. The attack led to fierce clashes on the campus, leaving scores injured -- mostly protesters, including female students.

## Investigate killings of 3 journos

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It said Bangladesh authorities imposed an internet shutdown and severely disrupted mobile data services on July 18. Broadband internet was partially restored in limited areas on Tuesday evening, but mobile services and social media remained blocked as of July 26.

CPI also said it has confirmed attacks on 14 journalists and was

continuing to investigate reports that dozens more have been assaulted either by police, protesters, or supporters of Bangladesh Chhatra League.

Of the 14, several required hospital treatment for injuries, including head wounds, it added.

Referring to various sources, including media reports, CPI said Mehedi, a reporter for Dhaka Times,

the demands of younger generations; many in the student movement see the current opposition as little better than the Awami League."

"The rise of anti-quota protests has illustrated just how fragile one-party rule is in Bangladesh."

Prakash said foreign partners should urge the government to restore respect for civil rights immediately and pursue talks with those leading the anti-quota movement.

India, a staunch supporter of Hasina's government, should also use its leverage to help Bangladesh back on a path to stability by restoring multi-party democracy, good governance and respect for civil rights, ICG said.

"Doubling down on authoritarian methods to quell demonstrations without serious efforts at dialogue and political reform is unlikely to bring more than temporary calm," it added.

It also suggested dialogues with opposition groups, including the BNP.

The report suggested that a unity government or even a new national election are potential means of helping restore confidence in the political system.

"State and party leaders should encourage the emergence of new political forces that could channel

of the protests will place further stress on the country's ailing economy.

Once the immediate crisis is resolved, the government should assume the hard work of political reform, the ICG said.

"It should take steps to restore the multi-party system that it has undermined over the past fifteen years. The Awami League's dominance of the political landscape has helped create the conditions for a popular upheaval," it said.

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Peace Now Israel, a group pushing for a two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, said since the

offensive on Gaza began, Israel has established at least 25 outposts, most of them agricultural outposts", in the occupied West Bank.

"The cabinet approved the establishment of five new settlements: Eyyat, Givat Assaf, Sde Ephraim, Adorayim, and Nachal Haletz, all illegal outposts intended to become official settlements," the report said.

In the eastern area of Nablus, north of the occupied West Bank, Israeli forces detained seven Palestinians during a raid, according to the Wafa news agency.

Palestinian security and local sources told Wafa that several Israeli military vehicles stormed the area with tear gas and stun grenades near the Askar refugee camp.