

Poorly arranged concerts should not be an ‘Aadat’

Jal’s controversial outing sparks age-old debate

“Boss, I can’t stand in here, let alone take photos. People have broken in and it’s extremely chaotic,” said our freelance photographer Thabit from Jamuna Future Park (JFP), where Pakistani rock sensation Jal performed on Saturday. The concert, originally supposed to take place at Purbachal’s Dhaka Arena, was abruptly shifted to JFP because of heavy rain.



PHOTOS: THABIT AL BASHAR

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SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Due to the sudden venue change, organisers, Assen Buzz and Xirconium, were unable to provide proper logistics for concert. Hundreds of hooligans stormed in due to the lack of proper security, resulting in the proceedings becoming mired in chaotic disarray. Assessing the situation, I instructed the photographer to abandon the assignment. Then he informed me the army was there to control the audience and he could continue. The concert, titled *Legends of the Decade*, featured Jal, alongside Bangladeshi bands Aurthohin, Vikings and Conclusion. It is rather telling of the people when the army has to show up because of how people behave at a concert. “They brought an international band to a mall to perform,” said Sakib, who had attended the concert with high hopes. “It was a total joke.

Organisers started taking selfies with the band mid-show, while Jal had to ask 20 times for a light to be turned off.”

“I was shopping at JFP when I stumbled across the concert from the balcony,” said Saadh, who currently works at a private bank in Dhaka. “I just stood there and enjoyed a better view than people who paid Tk 3000.”

During the concert, there were multiple skirmishes between some organisers and people who had tried and succeeded in entering forcefully, before the JFP authorities had to call in the army.

“Throughout the first half of the concert, drinking water wasn’t provided to the bands, and I saw Conclusion rather irate because of it. It was hell in there,” said Thabit, who was relieved to finally be able to provide photos of the concert.

A one-hour break had to be introduced by the organisers to ‘allow’ Aurthohin to perform. Aurthohin, a marquee Bangladeshi act led by Bassbaba Sumon, took all the deficiencies of sound and lighting gracefully, and performed their heart out. However, the arguable coup de grâce to the concert happened when Jal had to be stopped mid-act amidst their final set for an absurdly abrupt ending of the concert, leaving people furious.

“It is so disrespectful to treat an international band this way,” said Rubaba, a student of North South University. “We were shocked and to see them being escorted down the stage without even completing their set.”

When approached, Anondo Chowdhury, CEO



Authorities calls in the army to control the mob and reinstate order at the venue.

of Assen Buzz, admitted that the mismanagement was primarily due to the sudden change in venue. “We knew that to deviate from our original plan, which was at Dhaka Arena, would be a problem. We had every single precaution taken at that venue, and simply could not accommodate those precautions at a mall,” he said, audibly disappointed. Anondo further explained that due to major earthing that could have been life-threatening to the artistes, they had to stop the performances. “I am grateful to the bands who knew that the concert would be a

compromise, but performed anyway.”

AK Rahul, a prominent musician and organiser, believes that many organisers try to make a name for themselves with international artistes before they even understand how a concert works. “I have been arranging concerts for 15 years, and you cannot skip your baby steps. Organisers are more concerned about the marketing than ensuring the quality of the concert. First, learn to organise for 200 people, then try to organise for 2000.” Rahul further emphasised on the importance of respecting the audience. “Do not see the audience as Tk 500 notes, see them as people, your work will immediately improve.”

However, there is much to learn for the audience as well. “There is only so much organisers can do if so many people want to break in,” said Rudan Al Amin, CEO of Dhaka Broadcast. “People have even broken into charity concerts! That being said, the venue selection was a big misstep, we all saw this from a mile away, when JFP became the venue for Jal’s concert.”

Powersurge vocalist Jamshed Chowdhury believes that the free concerts have ruined the music industry, and has led people to become entitled to ask for free passes. “I had been saying for a long time that *Joy Bangla* and similar free concerts have led to people refusing to want to pay to see artistes perform, resulting in the increase in such hooligans barging into paid concerts as well. When I brought it up first, people trolled me, saying that I only said it because I did not get a ‘slot’ at *Joy Bangla*, go figure!”

The author is the Editor of Arts & Entertainment, The Daily Star

COUNTRYWIDE

LACK OF DUSTBINS

Waste dumping pollutes Brahmaputra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Several thousand residents of Islambagh area in Mymensingh city have been dumping daily waste on the bank of the Brahmaputra river for years due to lack of public awareness and absence of sufficient dustbins.

Although the meanace has been continuing for over a decade now, the authorities concerned are seemed reluctant to stop the act.

While talking to this correspondent, some local residents alleged that they have sought Mymensingh City Corporation’s (MCC) help on several occasions to set up adequate number of dustbins in the area, but no initiatives has been taken yet.

As there is no proper garbage management system, inhabitants of the area dump their household waste along the Brahmaputra bank according to their will, said Ansar Ali, a local resident.

Not only here, garbage dumping into the bed of the Old Brahmaputra river near Kalibari Puratan Gudarghat (Old Ferry Ghat) has also been continuing for years, but the authorities concerned are keeping a blind eye, creating concerns among the environmentalists, they further alleged.

Though the city corporation has a designated spot at Char Kalibari on the

other side of the Brahmaputra Bridge, sometimes the garbage carrying trucks dump waste into the river at night on the plea of serious traffic jam or shortage of manpower, locals said.

During the monsoon, the pile of garbage often gets washed away and falls into the river, accelerating water pollution and threats of different water borne diseases, they alleged.

The mindless dumping of waste is not only polluting the river water but the adjoining residential areas also, putting hundreds of people in serious health hazard, said advocate Shibbir Ahmed Liton, secretary of Mymensingh Poribesh Rokkha O Unnayan Andolon, a citizen platform.

“We have submitted memorandums to local administration and city corporation authority on numerous occasions urging them to stop the heinous act, but nothing has been done so far,” Liton said.

Terming lack of dustbins a lame excuse, advocate Nazrul Islam Chunnu, convener of Jonouddogh, Mymensingh unit, said once the garbage mixed with the river water, it affects the ecological balance and bio-diversity as well.

Contacted, Mohabbat Ali, conservation inspector at MCC, said around 500 tonnes of garbage are being produced in the city area every day and they can manage about 480 tonnes.

Biman curtails flights on five int’l routes

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Japan in addition to generating profit by operating on this route.

The state minister was also optimistic about making the new route profitable to attract passengers from Nepal, Bhutan, and the north-eastern states of India apart from Bangladeshi nationals.

However, despite initial optimism, the route has proven to be a loss-making venture due to the airline’s inefficiency and mismanagement, said an aviation expert.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Kazi Wahidul Alam, an aviation expert, criticised Biman for its lack of effective planning, promotion, and

marketing strategies to attract passengers and make the route profitable.

During the inauguration of the Narita route, the then Biman chief Shafiu Azim said the national flag carrier was planning to carry its passengers to Australia, the west coast of the United States, and Canada with the help of other carriers via Japan through code sharing.

“We are exploring with other airlines interlinking or code sharing so that we can offer our passengers different routes beyond Japan like a 360 degree airline,” the Biman boss had said.

Although one year has passed, Biman could do

little in this regard.

In December 2021, Biman also resumed flights to Manchester, but has now been forced to reduce the number of flights on this route due to financial losses. The national flag carrier is only earning profits in 11 out of 21 international routes.

Currently, Biman is only generating profits on 11 out of 21 international destinations, namely, London, Toronto, Dubai, Jeddah, Madina, Riyadh, Dammam, Bangkok, Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore.

The airline is incurring operational losses on six international destinations, including Manchester,

Kuwait, Delhi, Kolkata, Guangzhou, and Narita.

The remaining four international routes—Abu Dhabi, Muscat, Doha, and Sharjah—are gradually becoming profitable by reducing the load penalty through coordinated excess baggage weight with airfare.

Due to a significant decline in passenger demand, Biman has reduced its weekly flights to Kolkata from 14 to seven. Flights to Delhi and Chennai have also been cut from seven to three weekly flights each. The downturn in passenger traffic is attributed to India’s restricted visa issuance, which has led to a decrease in travellers between the two countries.

Death toll

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the level of its main Bagmati river up 2.2 m (7 ft) past the danger mark, experts said.

But there were some signs of respite yesterday morning, with the rains easing in many places, said Govinda Jha, a weather forecaster in the capital.

“There may be some isolated showers, but heavy rains are unlikely,” he said.

Television images showed police rescuers in knee-high rubber boots using picks and shovels to clear away mud and retrieve 16 bodies of passengers from two buses swept away by a massive landslide at a site on the key route into Kathmandu.

Weather officials in the capital blamed the rainstorms on a low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal extending over parts of neighbouring India close to Nepal.

Haphazard development amplifies climate change risks in Nepal, say climate scientists at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

12,000 bhoori

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the cooperative sector,” he remarked.

The conference also featured discussions on BARD’s recent research and initiatives in the field of rural development and cooperatives in Bangladesh.

The event was attended by special guests including Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), Professor Dr Tofail Ahmed, a local government expert, and Saif Uddin Ahmed, director general of Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD).

The session was presided over by Mosammat Shahanara Khatun, secretary to the Rural Development and Cooperative Division under the Ministry of LGED.



Dumping of waste materials badly affecting local environment as well as the already dying Brahmaputra river. The photo was taken from Mymeningh city’s Islampur area a few days ago.

PHOTO: STAR