

Cheap CD's : music companies lose out

Music industry powerless as pirated and cheaper CD's continue to be sold

By F. MERLIN FLOWER

'Commercial Mix Vol.2' reads the CD (Compact disc), a good collection of seventeen songs from the latest English albums. The maximum retail price inscribed on it is Rs. 300, but the black markets chuck it out for Rs. 80. Ramesh Kumar, a college student, is very happy to get cheaper CDs, and 'doesn't care a bit about piracy,' as original CD's cost more than Rs.600.

"The comparative cost advantage is driving people (like Ramesh) towards pirated CD's leaving the music companies to churn on losses," said I.V. Patel, Coordinator of IMI (Indian Music Industry) Karnataka. The IMI is a conglomerate of 50 music companies in India, including Tips, Venus and Magna Sound. "If all these music companies make cheaper CD's, then piracy will definitely come down," said Manish Kapoor from National Market, a black market in Bangalore. Patel agreed with this suggestion, but said that the music companies had to meet lot of costs involved in production, manufacture and recording which were absent for the smugglers.

Gulshan Bawja, a practicing Advocate-on-Record in the Supreme Court of India, defined piracy as a breach (violation), by any one, of one or more of the legal rights which under the provisions of the following Acts, vest with another legal entity: -

1. The copyright Act 1997
2. The patents Act, 1970
3. The geographical indications of goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999
4. The trade and merchandise marks Act, 1958.

5. The designs act, 1911.

The above rights are generically called 'Intellectual Property Rights' (IPR, for short).

These rights are enforced through a matrix of mechanisms provided by the said Acts and the Rules framed under these Acts;



The black market : hub of pirated CD's

- a) The Code of Civil Procedure, 1908;
- b) The Information Technology Act, 2000; etc.

A legal entity may be a person, company, organization, etc which can sue or be sued as such an entity. Under the copyright Act 1957, 194 persons were arrested in Bangalore in 1994, said Jeyaramaiah, Inspector, Bangalore City Police. " But of these only 90 people were prosecuted, for lack of witness account," said Patel . He added that during raids on pirated shops two witness account is needed and in most cases when the count sits for hearing these witnesses absent themselves leading to repeated adjournments.

It's not only the cheapness of the CD's, which are driving the people to the black market, but also the variety of songs in a CD. "The pirated CD's

gleam all the best song and put them in a single CD, Will any music company offer this advantage," asked Mahesh. Umesh Baliwal, Planet-M, a music shop, said that the large number of music companies make it difficult to include all songs in a single cassette, as they have rights only to some albums. It's for the music companies to reach a compromise on this regard said, Dinesh Gowalkar of IMI. "But as long as we have customers and cheaper CD's the music companies are powerless," said Manish.

We are not scared of the police, after all every customer of ours knows that it's a pirated CD, said Mahesh Kumar, National Market. "The graph of prosecution is inversely related to the graft (corruption) amongst the law-enforcing agencies, including the judiciary," said Bawja. He added that the dealers in pirated CD's pay hafta (a pre-fixed weekly bribe) to the local police, and that such a dealer is arrested only if the hafta has not been paid or, sometimes, merely to play to the gallery (i.e. just a show to please the general public and their own seniors). There are 12 shops in national market itself selling pirated CD's. The police raided the place in 2003, said Patel, and the shopkeepers were forced to down their shutters, he said. But even though they agreed not to sell the CD's, after five days pirated CD's were back on the racks. Patel was happy with the co-operation from the police, but felt more had to be done.

The IMI has been working with the police and helping them raid the pirated shops, said Patil. But M.D. Basannavar, DCP (Crime) refused to comment on saying that it was a 'sensitive issue.'

Foot painting tells the story

Sheela exhibits her artistic skills by painting her world of imagination with her feet



Expressions conveyed through foot

By SRIPARNA CHAKRABORTY

Paintings symbolise the fundamentals of hard labour put forth by an artist. However, when one realises that the artist uses her foot and not her hand surprises us. Sheela, uses her foot to paint, has come from Lucknow to exhibit her artistic skills in the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishad from 15th - 20th of this month.

A train accident at the age of four left her with no hands and three toes of her left foot chopped. It gives a gory picture of what her childhood has been. There is not much of a revelation until one sees her painting and finish her daily core of works with her foot. "She does everything with her foot, can cook too" says Ravi Kumar, her brother who takes care of all her shows.

The weeklong painting exhibition was inaugurated by Rani Satish "People have not flocked in, to see my artistry but the response has been good so far," she says with a wide

grin on her face. As she sits, young and old walk in and take a leisurely look at her paintings. This is the second time Sheela has come to Bangalore; she recalls her first visit when one painting fetched her fifteen thousand. This time the paintings rate from three thousand to nine thousand.

She has been inspired by various painters across the country. Jatin Das and Satish Gujral seem to capture her imagination more.

Being handicapped has not made her helpless and dependent, she finished her college from Lucknow University in arts and culture and was showered with various national and state level scholarships. Life maybe have been too harsh on Sheela, but she brings out happiness and joy with the belief that nothing can prove to be a hindrance. Her works portray happiness and acceptance, and a certain amount of positivity.

Lakes in the city under threat

Ninety percent of the lakes in the city are becoming dumping yards; no more place to store water

By KATHERINE GEORGE

Oh it's a garbage dump yard, but where is the lake, one begins to wonder, when they see the Mahadevapura Lake right next to the old Madras ring road. "At one point of time, this used to be a beautiful lake; the residents of this area would go for their morning and evening walks along the lake," said Ramesh resident of Raja Rajeshwari Colony. "But now, it is a nightmare for all of us," he added. The Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP) contractor's haven't stopped dumping the garbage in the Mahadevapura Lake.

This lake is just one among 90% (the figures) of the lakes in Bangalore that are dying. Lakes are deteriorating in Bangalore at a very fast rate, said Vanashree Vipin Singh, deputy conservator of forests, Lake Development Authority (LDA). Lakes are meant to store water, but since a lot of garbage is being dumped into most of the lakes, the garbage takes ground and begins to grow inside the lake, she explained. "Now lakes are turning into land that becomes a breeding ground for weeds and more garbage," she added. "There were about 250 lakes in Bangalore alone, but over 15 years, since we haven't taken care of them properly, there are only 60-70 lakes in Bangalore," said Akshay Heblikar, director, Eco watch. "Bangalore is a

fast developing area, and even the smallest piece of land will attract a land shark and they are encroaching on most of the catchments area around a lake," said Akshay Heblikar. "And the sad part is that there is no one to check on such landowners, the authorities are giving them lenience which they don't deserve," he added.

The Anapuram Lake, in the HSR layout, faces the same threat. "Garbage is being dumped into the lake, said Madhumitha Balakrishna,

Bangalore is going to have warmer days ahead of it. When the ecological balance is disturbed, it will result in the rise of temperature and bore well and wells in the city will run dry. Lake development authority has found itself in an unenviable place, and has turned to the private sectors for help. "We are asking NGO's, corporate organisations and other organisations to come forward and adopt lakes. The public should be a part of this too; they have to take an



The deteriorating lakes pose a serious threat to ecological balance

initiative in maintaining a balance between urban development ecological balance," said Vanashree "Lumbini Gardens, a corporate organisation has adopted the Nagavara Lake, said Vanashree, but Wipro after discovering the responsibilities involved in taking care of a lake backed out," she added. "It is time consuming and a lot of money is involved. An organisation can take responsibility for a lake for 15 years, paying rent every month to the LDA." When asked how an organisation will benefit from this scheme, she said that, money obtained from entry fee, boating activities, ect. will go to the organisation.

A nice cold glass of Aloe Vera

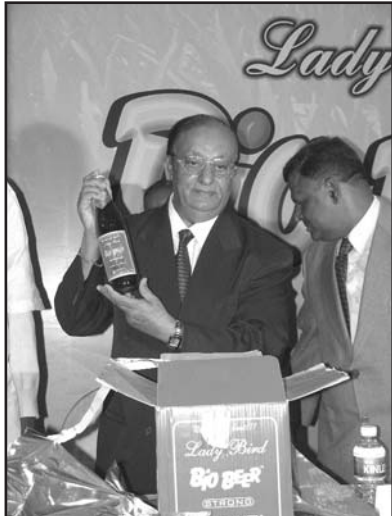
Lady Bird Bio-beer has been introduced in the city by Khoday breweries

By CASEY JOHNSON

Jumping on the Bangalore biotechnology bandwagon, a local brewery has teamed up with a biotech firm, to produce an Aloe Vera and herbal extract fortified "Bio Beer."

Sold in both 330ml and 650ml sizes, Lady Bird Bio Beer contains the full compliment of alcohol, and

both Premium and Strong varieties of this "healthy" brew are priced the same as Kingfisher. Scheduled to hit Bangalore liquor shops this week, this medicinal drink is targeted towards the educated class. Hari Khoday, Managing Director of Khoday



Bio-beer: The beer with a difference

Breweries claims the beer is liquid balm for such conditions as: menopause, skin disorders, sexual impotency and, best of all, "it does not allow your tummy to grow."

And, judging by the beer bellies, both on the dais and amongst a thirsty crowd waiting for the official launch at the Leela Palace last week, this is a good thing. But what does an Aloe fortified beer taste like?

"Taste's like beer to me," says a

software programmer helping himself to what Advait Biotech and Khoday breweries are claiming is a "first of its kind in the world product". And while a mix of doctors and brewers in attendance assured the crowd that in addition to 6000 years of homeopathic healing, Aloe Vera extract and the other natural herbal CO2 extracts also fight constipation and regurgitation. (And, no, I am not making any of this up.)

But perhaps the best-missed marketing opportunity was what Dr. Jaganath, Brewmaster MD confided to this reporter as we sampled the inaugural batch. "The thing is," he said in a hushed, conspiratorial tone, "with this beer there really isn't any hangover. You'll feel fine the next day." Unfortunately this claim, along with the anti-constipation promise has not been independently verified. For while a Malaysian distributor was inking a deal for the first exported batch of Bio Beer, Khoday Breweries wouldn't part with case for scientific testing by this reporter.