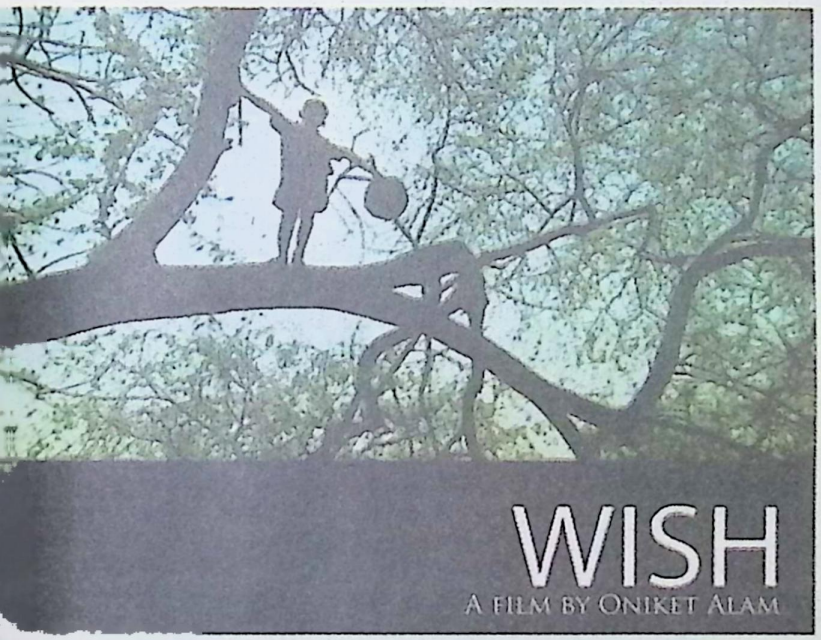
"If we were to look at films that went against the rules prescribed by the government then Zahir Raihan's documentary 'Stop Genocide', released in 1971, would definitely be the first independent film of our country. This documentary was the first political and independent film of our liberated country in every which way, be it in terms of direction, artistic vision, production design, capital or technology. It also forced the expatriate government of Bangladesh staying in India to fund three other documentaries to gather worldwide support against Pakistan," says Murad.

While Zahir Raihan was the pioneer in using film as a medium to gather support for the Liberation War, filmmaker Alamgir Kabir was instrumental in keeping the spirit of independent filmmaking alive with his short films such as 'Liberation Fighter', 'Amara Duijon' and 'Ek Shagor Rokter Binimoye' and feature films like 'Dhire Bahe Meghna and 'Surya Kanya', adds Murad.







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## The Creative Duo

A chance meeting at an acting workshop led to a fruitful working association for filmmakers Oniket Alam and Sakib Ahmed. Oniket is a well known short film director, with his films 'The Professionals', 'The Wish' and 'The Return' winning laurels at different international film festivals. Sakib, on the other hand, has tried his hand in TV direction with his comedy 'Sattar Driver', being a popular hit amongst the masses and drama 'Ami, Tumi Aar Orpon', being critically acclaimed for its deft direction and storytelling.

The filmmakers have been working on a feature film from the last two years, with Oniket at the helm as the director and Sakib donning the hat of a producer. The film, tentatively titled 'Kora Rowd', deals with the issue of sexual harassment, a subject that both filmmakers feel should be talked about more.

"Being an independent film, we faced a number of constraints in finding the right investors for 'Kora Rowd.' We had gone to several NGOs, as we thought that they'd be interested in investing in a movie with such a strong social message. But as we learnt, NGOs rarely give money to these kind of ventures and even if they do, it's at the end, after the funding process is over," says Sakib wryly.

While Sakib's realisation to be a filmmaker was a sudden epiphany, Oniket learnt gradually that filmmaking is the profession that he had to pursue.

"In my village in Shatkhira, there was limited supply of electricity, and so there was no scope of watching TV. Whenever I would hear my grandmother tell me stories, I would spin the related images in my head. And then when I got older, we would watch movies on the national Indian channel, Doordarshan. But I never could watch the whole movie, as I had to complete my studies or run some errands. Even while I was studying, my mind would wander to the film that I had left