

CENTRE STAGE

IFTAKAR CHOWDHURY

'Agnee' director Iftakar Chowdhury has made a name for himself in the showbiz industry with his skills behind the camera. In this interview with Star Showbiz, the popular director talks about his struggles and accomplishments.

Tell us something about yourself.

I started my filmmaking journey back in 2008. I've been working in the Bangladeshi showbiz industry for a long time now.

What was your first project?

My very first project was a telefilm in 2008, called *Rokkha*. It was for *Channel i*, and starred a young Arifin Shuvoo. It was a high concept TV production, with a substantial budget of ten lac Taka. Many people thought that I was doing a feature film – automated dialogue replacement, special effects, background music, visual effects and the lot. The telefilm actually premiered at Star Cineplex, before it aired on the third day of Eid.

What inspired you to start film direction?

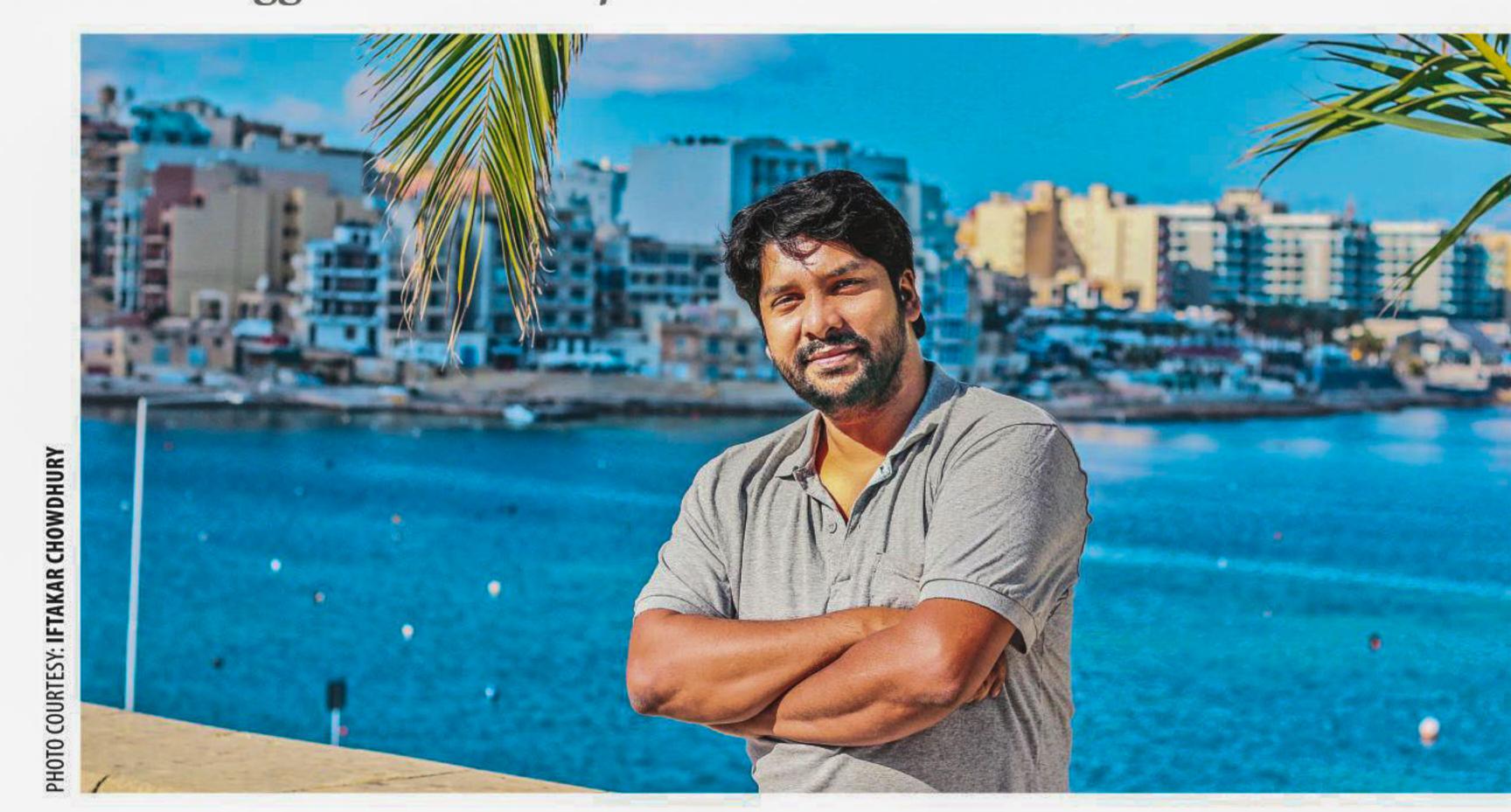
As a child, I once snuck into a cinema hall to see John McTiernan's *Die Hard*. It completely changed my life. After watching the film, I kept telling myself that I had to make something like that. Then I enrolled in Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School. Popular celebrities of the likes of Al Pacino, Jennifer Aniston, Adrien Brody, Timothée Chalamet, Ansel Elgort and Marlon Wayans had previously studied there.

Tell us about your acting ventures.

I always do cameos in my films. This is to pay homage to the great Alfred Hitchcock.

Tell us about your struggles.

There was a very apparent lack of understanding from the industry, regarding digital ingestion, projection, production design based on colour pallet and sound design, among others. No one was thinking outside the box. Different genres, like thriller, superhero, horror weren't being explored. Every single producer I met



wanted a hero-oriented film, which was based on a revenge storyline. I went against the norm, and did female-led films, such as *Agnee*, *Action Jasmine* and *Bizli*. I felt that female representation was needed in our industry.

Do you have any upcoming project?

I have several planned, but am unsure as to which will be completed first. That being said, I would love to do a zombie film in the near future.

What is your advice for up and coming directors?

I would ask them to close their eyes and picture themselves in a cinema hall, watching the film that they will eventually make. They should make films that they would enjoy watching themselves.

Amina Hossain

