



2021: LOOKING BACK

5 silver screen sensations throughout the year

SHARMIN JOYA
As the film fraternity recovered from the pandemic and adapted with the 'new normal', the industry saw a bloom near the end of the year. It was a breakthrough year for Bangla films not only in terms of local box office, but international acceptance. **REHANA MARYAM NOOR** 2021 will be a memorable year for filmmaker Abdullah Mohammad Saad and actress Azmeri Haque Badhon, as their project "Rehana Maryam Noor" earned worldwide acclaim, starting with the Cannes Film Festival, a first for Bangladesh at the main category of which is a dream destination of any filmmaker. The film was screened at the festival's 'Un Certain Regard' section, and received a standing ovation there. It was eventually released in

local halls on November 12, with overwhelmingly positive reactions from critics. **NONA JOLER KABBO** Rezwan Shahriar Sumit's debut directorial "Nona Joler Kabbo" (The Salt in Our Waters) was premiered at United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), and was appreciated for its original story, portraying struggles of fishermen living in the coastal region. The film, which was released on November 26 across the country, earned many international accolades, including Kolkata's NETPAC Awards, Canada's MISAFF Awards, among many others. The performance of National Award winning actor Titas Zia was also praised in the film, as well as virtuoso actor Fazlur Rahman Babu.



MISSION EXTREME The much anticipated action thriller starring Arifin Shuvoo, Taksin Rahman, and Jannatul Ferdous Oishee hit the theatres on December 3. Jointly directed by Sunny Sanwar and Faisal Ahmed, the film created quite a stir before its release. The big-budget venture was released worldwide including releasing in the

USA, UK, and Australia among other countries. **LAL MOROGER JHUTI** Noted filmmaker Nurul Alam Atique returned to the silver screen after 11 years with the government granted film, "Lal Moroger Jhuti", based on the Liberation War of Bangladesh. The film starring Ashna Habib Bhabna, was released on December 10. It earned much appreciation for its storytelling, especially Bhabna's rebellious presence in the film, co-starring with an actual rooster. **MRIDHA BONAM MRIDHA** The family drama film tugs at the emotional strings between father and son, and family bonding. As the film was released on December 24 within short notice, it did not spend much time in promotion. The Roni Bhowmik debut directorial has been flaring with positive reviews

from both the general populace, and media personalities. It features Siam Ahmed, Tarique Anam Khan and Nova Feroze. The chemistry among Tarique Anam Khan and Siam Ahmed, who portrayed father and son in the film, was simply outstanding, drawing tears out of the most rigid viewers. **HONOURABLE MENTIONS** There were many other films that trended this year, among movie-goers, one of which was N Rashed Chowdhury's "Chandraboti Kotha". "Mujib Amar Pita", Bangladesh's first animated theatrical release, was also released this year. It was directed by Sohel Mohammad Rana, using an extensive cast of young talented animators. MD Nazrul Islam's "Chiranjib Mujib", and Mir Sabbir's debut directorial "Raat Jaga Phool" are slated to be released on December 31.

SERIES REVIEW

Unapologetic distortion of history in Pakistani 1971 drama 'Jo Bichar Gaye'

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA
As Bangladesh celebrates its 50th anniversary of victory, Pakistani drama series "Jo Bichar Gaye" shamelessly presents distorted accounts of the 1971 Liberation war, by showing protesting Dhaka University students as "uncouth bullies" and Pakistani army men as "righteous gentlemen". Directed by Haissam Hussain and scripted by Ali Moeen, the Pakistani series is an adaptation of Col ZI Farrukh's autobiographical novel of the same name. The series, which premiered on December 12 has aired two episodes till now. The intro highlights the segments that the series plans on covering. They refer to the Agartala Conspiracy case, martial law withdrawal, 6-Point Demand, delay in National Assembly session, and student and political activities at Dhaka University. The show centres around three protagonists: Pakistan army Captain Farrukh (played by Talha Chahour), Dhaka University student and Pakistan sympathizer Sonia (Maya Ali), and fellow DU student-activist Rumi (Wahaj Ali), who feels injustice is being done with people of East Pakistan. The series craftily misleads the audience with Pakistani concocted narrative. The first episode shows student activists of Awami League forcing their peers to join their movement and



instigating them to revolt against the Pakistani administration. The serial goes as far as to try and taint Awami League's victory in the 1970 election with derogatory remarks. The drama shows actor Usman Zia in the role of a Dhaka University teacher who tries to instigate and manipulate the student activists to abduct and bully non-Bengali students. This further establishes that the serial is nothing more than propaganda, trying to instill outdated narratives that even the Pakistani youths are now starting to question. The most infuriating element of the series is the laughably bad and strange language that the makers try to pass off as Bangla. Usman Zia and Wahaj Ali's accents, while trying to speak supposedly Bangla words, literally sound like two people trying to pronounce words with "paan"



in their mouths -- outright disrespectful to the language. Sonia, the strong-willed and opinionated "heroine" of the series, passes information on to the Pakistani army, despite being a Bengali. She takes a stand against the "revolt", refraining from speaking Bangla as it goes against her love for Pakistan. "Jo Bichar Gaye" till now has only portrayed a distorted narrative of history that only the ignorant will believe, completely disregarding the brutalities unleashed on Bengalis by the Pakistani army. This, however, is not the first on-screen fiction produced in Pakistan in recent times on the subject of 1971 and liberation of Bangladesh. Synopsis of "Khel Khel Mein", a Pakistani movie released this year, reads, "A story inspired by true events, unfolding 50 years of mistrust, memories, and myths."

I CHASED MONEY PARINEETI CHOPRA

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK
Noted Bollywood actress Parineeti Chopra spoke about her career lull, which came after 2012's "Ishaqzaade". She admitted to having abused her position after convincing herself that her fans would accept her in 'mediocre' films. In an interview with Filmfare, Parineeti said that she received 'regressive' advice from people who haven't changed with the times, and told her things like, "You need to just be sexy, you need to do songs in films, you need to just romance the hero and you need to learn how to be a heroine." Parineeti admitted to 'chasing money', but said that even with her films that now make her cringe, she doesn't regret doing them. "Sometimes, I chased money. I became complacent and a little less focused. That's why this happened. That's why I was saying okay to mediocrity. I was never overconfident. When you have five flop films, people say she has gone mad. But they're actually just five bad decisions," she added.



Organised by SkyTracker Limited, Dhaka Rock Fest 2.0 was a huge success – highlighting the return of Bassbaba Sumon and Aurthoin on stage, in full glory. Featuring renowned bands like Warfaze, Cryptic Fate, AvoidRafa alongside new generation favourites including Conclusion and Arekta Rock band, ICCB was teeming with music and youthfulness.

PHOTO: TASIN ZULKERNAIN