

The evolution of holiday films

From classics to contemporary gems

'Klaus' offers a unique take on the origin story of Santa Claus, exploring the character's early years and the events that led to the creation of the iconic figure.

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The holiday season has always been synonymous with warmth, joy, and the timeless tradition of watching festive films that capture the spirit of the festivities. Over the years, these films have undergone a remarkable evolution, transitioning from timeless classics to contemporary gems. The golden age of holiday films is often associated with timeless classics that have become an integral part of our holiday traditions.

Directed by Frank Capra, *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) portrays the transformative power of

entertained but also instilled values that continue to resonate with audiences of all ages.

In the following years, the animation industry brought a new dimension to holiday storytelling. *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1964) follows an outcast, Rudolph's journey of self-discovery and acceptance as he embraces his unique qualities. The charming characters and the whimsical animation style contributed to the film's appeal.

A Charlie Brown Christmas (1965), directed by Bill Melendez, is another animated classic that has become a staple for holiday watchlists. The film centres

for Christmas. Throughout the series of films, Kevin must defend himself, turning the misery into a comedic and action-packed adventure. Similarly, *The Santa Clause* (1994), directed by John Pasquin, takes a humorous approach to the holiday genre. The protagonist, Scott Calvin, accidentally causes Santa Claus to fall from his roof on Christmas Eve. As a result, he must take on the role of Santa, facing various comedic challenges and misunderstandings. These films introduced a comedic element to the holiday genre, appealing to the audience with their humour and family-centric plots.

Sarah Smith and Barry Cook, offers an imaginative take on the classic story of Santa Claus. The film peaks into the high-tech operation at the North Pole, where Santa's delivery of presents on Christmas Eve is a well-orchestrated mission. The story focuses on Arthur, Santa's younger son, who embarks on an adventurous journey to ensure that a misplaced gift reaches its rightful recipient before sunrise. Finally, *Elf* (2003), directed by Jon Favreau, takes a fantastical approach to the holiday genre. The film follows Buddy, a human raised by elves at the North Pole, as he embarks on a journey to New York City to find his real father.

The evolution of holiday films is also marked by a growing emphasis on diversity and inclusion. *Klaus* (2019), directed by Sergio Pablos, offers a unique take on the origin story of Santa Claus. The film introduces viewers to a reimagined version of Santa, exploring the character's early years and the events that led to the creation of the iconic figure. It not only celebrates the magic of Christmas but also weaves in elements that resonate with various cultural traditions. My personal favourite, *A Boy Called Christmas* (2021), follows Nikolas, who embarks on an adventure to find his father in the fabled village of the elves, Elphelin. While the story unfolds in a fictional world inhabited by magical creatures and characters, it draws inspiration from several cultures.

Lastly, *The Christmas Chronicles* (2018), a Clay Kaytis directorial, follows the adventures of two siblings who team up with Santa Claus to save Christmas. By blending contemporary elements with the timeless magic of the holiday season, the film embraces a global perspective, acknowledging the diversity of its audience and the multifaceted nature of holiday traditions.



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

kindness and selflessness as George Bailey discovers the profound impact of his life on others, with the help of a guardian angel. In George Seaton's *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947), the belief in the magic of Christmas and the goodness of people takes centre stage as a man claims to be Santa Claus, prompting a legal battle that sheds light on generosity and open-mindedness. Finally, *White Christmas* (1954), a Michael Curtiz directorial, uses music and camaraderie to celebrate the holiday season, emphasising themes of friendship, love, and the joy of giving as two former soldiers come together to save a failing inn. These films not only

around the beloved Peanuts characters, with Charlie Brown feeling disheartened by the commercialism of Christmas. As he seeks the true meaning of the holiday, the story unfolds with humour, emotions, and timeless wisdom. These films introduced a younger generation to the magic of the holidays in a visually enchanting way, creating timeless experiences for families to share.

The latter part of the 20th century saw a shift in holiday films with modern twists on traditional themes. *Home Alone*, directed by Chris Columbus, revolves around eight-year-old Kevin McCallister, who is accidentally left behind when his family goes on vacation

In recent years, holiday films have evolved further with a diverse range of narratives that reflect the changing dynamics of society, specifically highlighting the notions regarding Santa. Robert Zemeckis's *The Polar Express* (2004) follows a young boy who embarks on a magical train journey to the North Pole on Christmas Eve. The train is on a mission to pick up Santa and deliver presents to children around the world. Throughout the journey, the protagonist encounters a diverse cast of characters, each with their own beliefs and doubts about the existence of Santa.

On a similar note, *Arthur Christmas* (2011), directed by

Jaya Ahsan named amongst 'breakout performers' by Indian media



Jaya Ahsan has recently made her Bollywood debut alongside Pankaj Tripathi in *Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury's web film, Kadak Singh*, released on Zee 5 on December 8. The film has received critical acclaim since its release.

Hindustan Times recently released a 2023 report on top-performing web content, where Jaya Ahsan secured the top spot. The actress is praised in the report as one amongst several having an 'Outstanding on OTT: Breakout Performance.'

Ahsan skillfully portrays Nayana, Pankaj Tripathi's character's girlfriend, in *Kadak Singh*.

Ranbir Kapoor's 'Animal' is now 4th highest Indian grosser in North America

Sandeep Reddy Vanga's action film *Animal*, featuring Ranbir Kapoor, has amassed Rs 862.2 crore globally within three weeks since its release on December 1, as announced by the makers last Friday.

Film trade analyst Ramesh Bala, sharing an update on *Animal's* North America (NA) box office on Sunday, revealed that the film is rapidly nearing



the USD 15 million mark and has already secured the position of the fourth highest Indian grosser.

Directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga, renowned for *Arjun Reddy* and *Kabir Singh*, the film delves into the toxic relationship between a father and son. Anil portrays the emotionally distant father, while Ranbir embodies the role of the traumatised and enraged son.

NEWS

Conviction

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2018, a group of leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations illegally gathered at the Panthapath intersection in Kalabagan to demand the release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

They then threw brickbats at the police and obstructed them from discharging duties.

Sub-Inspector Amit Hasan filed a case with Kalabagan Police Station following the incident.

Also yesterday, another Dhaka court sentenced 10 BNP members to two years imprisonment over political violence in Sutrapur in September 2018.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ataullah pronounced the judgement.

The court recorded statements of five prosecution witnesses during the trial.

Dhaka South BNP General Secretary Abdus Sattar and Jubo Dal's former ward level president Delowar Hossain are among the convicts.

The case statement said a group of BNP leaders and activists gathered at the Ray Shaheb Bazar intersection in Sutrapur on September 3 during a political programme. They blasted one crude bomb, threw brickbats towards police, and obstructed them from discharging their duties.

SI Mohammad Hafizulla filed a case with Sutrapur Police Station.

The same magistrate yesterday jailed nine BNP members for two years for obstructing police from discharging their duties in the Victoria Park area of Sutrapur in September 2018.

Four prosecution witnesses gave their statements.

The case statement said a group of BNP leaders and activists gathered in front of the Victoria Park Jame Masjid in Sutrapur on September 17 during a political programme, assaulted policemen, and obstructed them from discharging their duties.

SI Shamal Chandra Debnath filed a case with Sutrapur Police Station in this regard.

In addition, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Ahmed Humayun Kabir yesterday sentenced 10 BNP members to two years' imprisonment over political violence in Cantonment area in September 2018.

Over Tk 71 lakh spent

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which spent \$7,627; two Facebook pages called "Banglar Samachar", which spent \$5,129 and "Peoples Voice", which spent \$4,378; the official page of Barishal Mayor Abul Khair Abdullah, which spent \$3,658; a page called "Nouka Manei", which spent \$3,151; and the official fan page of Bangladesh Awami League, which spent \$2,856.

An overtly pro-AL media organisation called "Press Xpress" spent \$11,739 on ads, while another

similar page claiming to be a media agency called "BD Peoples Voice" spent \$7,377.

Meta makes it mandatory for those advertising elections or politics to complete an authorisation procedure involving providing contact details. The ad also runs with a disclaimer declaring who paid for it.

However, the report found that Meta is inadequate when it comes to detecting political ads that are not declaring themselves as political. "It is crucial to regulate and identify political and electoral ads to ensure that voters are not being unduly influenced by any party," it said.

"Fifty active advertisements obtained through keyword searches, containing clear political messages

and images, evaded Facebook's detection system. Out of them, 48 percent originated directly from the pages of political figures and parties," the organisation found.

"For the majority of the undetected advertisements, over 90 percent prominently displayed the names of a political party or a political person, and 72 percent of these ads included photos of a political leader or the insignia of a political organisation."

Also, at least two units of Jamaat-e-Islami ran ads that were not detected as political, it found.

"In many cases, pages ran political ads without providing sufficient information in disclaimers for months and even years. It implies that once disclaimer information is provided, there is little effort in verifying "functionality" and "correctness" of the information," the report added.

"As a result, to the users, the idea of identifying who is spending money for political advertisement remains as vague as the information advertisers provide in disclaimers."

They recommended that the Election Commission mandate all platforms to disclose political ad policies that are specific to the country and provide access to relevant data.

Pre-polls violence

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The AL candidate could not be contacted over phone.

Nazmul Uddin Al Azad, additional superintendent of Chittagong police, said a case was filed against 21 named and 120 unnamed people in this connection. Five were arrested.

Meanwhile, the house of Chittarpariya Union Parishad chairman was attacked and vandalised by criminals in Thanarpar village of Noakhali's Senbagh on Saturday night.

Chairman Abdur Rahman is a supporter of independent candidate for Noakhali 2 Ataur Rahman Bhuiyan, who alleged that followers of AL nominee Morshed Alam did the attack.

However, Morshed denied the allegation.

Nazmul Hasan Rajib, additional superintendent of Noakhali police, said police were probing the incident.

Meanwhile in Jhenaidah, the EC asked the Shaikupura upazila election officer to file a case against AL candidate for Jhenaidah 1 Abdul Hyee as his supporters staged a "showdown" with sharp weapons and threatened

an independent candidate.

The EC issued the order yesterday. On November 30, Chattogram-16 AL nominee Mustafizur Rahman Chowdhury beat up a journalist for his question about breaching of the electoral rules.

Mustafizur staged a "showdown" on his way to the office of returning officer to submit his nomination form. When asked, he scolded the reporter and beat him up.

The EC issued a notice yesterday saying it decided to file as a case against Mustafizur with the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court following an election enquiry committee probe report.

In Lalmonirhat 2 seat, AL candidate and Social Welfare Minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed at a meeting on Saturday night threatened to "break the neck" of a freedom fighter, a follower of an independent candidate.

In another development, Bangladesh Congress candidate for Bogura-4 Ashraf Alam, popularly known as Hero Alom, alleged that he came under attack by some AL activists at Kahalu Bazar yesterday evening.

Fighting has raged in the main southern city of Khan Yunis, the birthplace of Yahya Sinwar, Hamas' leader in Gaza and the man Israel holds most responsible for the October 7 attack.

Verdict in case

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and sought punishment for the accused.

On June 6, it framed charges against them. It also recorded statements of four prosecution witnesses in the case.

On September 9, 2021, Labour Inspector (general) SM Arifuzzaman of the Inspection for Factories and Establishments Department filed the case with the Third Labour Court of Dhaka.

According to the case documents, IFED officials on August 16, 2021 inspected the office of Grameen Telecom in the capital's Mirpur and found several violations of labour laws.

On August 19 that year, the department sent a letter to the authorities of Grameen Telecom, mentioning that 67 of its employees were supposed to be made permanent employees. But it was not done, the case statement said.

Besides, the employee's participation and welfare funds were yet to be formed, and five percent of the company's dividends, supposed to be paid to the workers, were not given, it added.

Israel pounds Gaza

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in makeshift tents and forced into the south of Gaza even as ground fighting comes closer.

Near the far southern Gaza city of Rafah, Umm Amir Abu al-Awl, 27, suffered wounds to her hand and legs in a strike on her house early yesterday.

"Who won?" she said. "Nothing has been achieved except killing civilians... They keep saying Rafah is safe. It is not safe. Nowhere is safe. Every house has a martyr and injured."

Israeli military spokesman Jonathan Conricus indicated that forces were close to gaining operational control in northern Gaza and that now "we focus our efforts against Hamas in southern Gaza".

Fighting has raged in the main southern city of Khan Yunis, the birthplace of Yahya Sinwar, Hamas' leader in Gaza and the man Israel holds most responsible for the October 7 attack.

A battle between

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Khasru stood by him, provided all the treatment support, and took responsibility for his two children, giving his elder daughter a job," he said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, 40 to 50 voters in the constituency comprising Netrokona Sadar and Barhatta echoed the same sentiment. They said his record of effectively disbursing safety net schemes, including allowances for the elderly and widows and cash assistance, would keep him ahead in the January 7 national polls.

They also had good words to say about Joy, who seems to have returned to people's good books after being in the news for the wrong reasons due to his brothers' wrongdoings when he was the MP.

"He has a celebrity image here. The most important thing about Joy is that he can easily mix with people and is widely liked by the youth," said Mahmudul Hasan, a resident of Barhatta.

"People usually do not remember the past," Mahmudul said, adding that it seems he has a lot of supporters.

"You will understand that if you look at his campaigns and processions, which are attended by a large number of people," he added.

Many in the constituency expressed a similar opinion, saying it would not be easy for Khasru to win and that they expect a tough battle between the two candidates.

However, AL leaders and activists in the district predict a win for Khasru, noting that top AL leaders who were initially against him have united and started working for his campaign.

Previously, divisions existed among district unit AL leaders.

Leaders like Shamsul Islam Liton, general secretary of district AL, Nazrul Islam Khan, municipality mayor, Prashanta Kumar Roy, vice-president of district AL, Lt Col Nur Khan, advisory member of district unit AL, and Arpita Khanom Shumi, president of municipality unit AL, collected nominations to run against Khasru.

Later, they withdrew their candidacies, joined Khasru's campaign and started going door-to-door to garner support for Khasru.

On the other hand, only a few AL leaders and activists including Joy's brothers -- Nur Khan Mithu, vice-president of the district AL, and Masud Khan Jony, convener of

district Jubo League -- and his uncle Golam Md Khan Pathan, member of the district unit AL, are working for Arif Khan Joy.

Some Jubo League leaders and activists, who are working with Joy's campaign, said some district unit AL leaders and activists are secretly communicating with Joy and working for his victory.

However, Shamsul Islam Liton, general secretary of district AL, asserted that the local unit is highly organised with leaders and activists working extensively for Khasru. He predicted victory by a substantial margin.