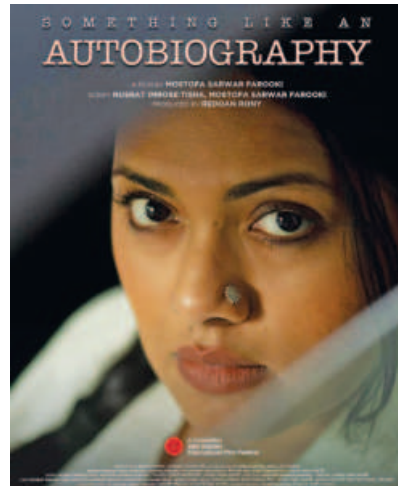


THE DOMINANCE OF OTT

What kept audiences subscribed in 2023



2023 has proven to be yet another eventful year for Bangladeshi over-the-top platforms, with the release of some outstanding projects. Chorki, Hoichoi, and Binge, among other platforms, have introduced a significant number of projects that generated considerable excitement among audiences over the past year. Let's look back at the series and films that have kept people subscribed throughout 2023.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Ashfaqe Nipun's web-series *Mohanagar* stands out in no small part due to its iconic character OC Harun, portrayed by Mosharraf Karim. The second season, titled *Mohanagar 2*, predictably became a sensation, keeping up with the gripping narrative that the director expertly crafted.

In addition to Mosharraf's performance, accolades have been showered upon actors such as Fazlur Rahman Babu, Afsana Mimi, Tanzika Amin, Rafiul Quader Rubel, and Dibya Joyti for their roles in the series. The director successfully maintained the momentum of the storyline, taking the risk of not retaining popular characters from the previous season, such as Moloy, portrayed by Mostafizur Noor Imran and the small-time crook Kaisar, played by Nasir Uddin Khan.

Conversely, Nasir Uddin Khan, who got to the peak of his career portraying dastardly criminal Allen Swapan, had the opportunity to get

to play the titular role in the spin-off series *Myself Allen Swapan*. This series, a standout of the year, showcased his engaging punchlines in Chattogram's dialect and unique persona under the direction of Shihab Shaheen. Another noteworthy mention is actor Rafiul Quader Rubel, who garnered critical acclaim for his role as a drug dealer in the same series.

Rubel, an outstanding 'character' artiste, made another notable impression on the audience with his first project, *Guti*, in which he played the role of a manager. Directed by Shankha Dasgupta, the project brought even more accolades for Azmeri Haque Badhan. Her compelling performance in the series was a treat for the audience, enhanced by the stellar acting of talents like Shariar Nazim Joy and Mousumi Hamid, among others.

This year, Vicky Zahed's *Ami Ki Tumi* earned significant popularity. The series starred Mehazabien Chowdhury, Shamol Mawla, and Junaid Bukdadi in the lead roles.



Dabbling in the sci-fi genre and presenting a unique plot involving a parallel universe, it left a strong impression on the audience.

Mizanur Rahman Aryan's lighthearted romantic film, *Unish20*, starred the once-popular small-screen pair of Arifin Shuvo and Afsan Ara Bindu. The storyline presented a contemporary love story



that served as a feel-good experience for the audience at a time when dark thrillers and mysteries have been more prominently hyped.

In the realm of a darker genre, Raihan Rali's film *Friday*, inspired by true events, emerged as another unlikely success this year. Featuring Tama Mirza, Nasir Uddin Khan, and Farzana Chobi, the film delivered

a grippingly dark thriller. Both audiences and critics concurred that Tama Mirza delivered the best performance of her career in this particular film.

Punormilone is yet another successful project by Aryan this year. After a considerable period, the audience found sheer enjoyment in watching this compelling family drama. The film effectively defied the audience's expectations, especially considering the prevailing 'thriller fatigue' on OTT platforms.

As the year neared its end, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki presented the inaugural project from the *Ministry of Love*, titled *Something Like an Autobiography*, marking his debut as an actor and sharing the screen with Nusrat Imrose Tisha. The film features a heartwarming storyline that blends elements of truth and fiction, narrating stories from the lives of the celebrity couple Tisha and Farooki. The film resonated with the audience, and even made its way to the Busan Film Festival.

There were also a few other

noteworthy projects this year that deserve a shout-out. Vicky Zahed's *The Silence*, starring Mehazabien Chowdhury and Shamol Mawla, stood out as a thriller that garnered audience appreciation. The series also featured stellar performances from Bijori Barkatullah and Sajal Noor.

Siddik Ahamed's directorial series *Agochora*, featuring Fazlur Rahman Babu and Zakia Bari Mamo, may not have generated much hype, but it received critical acclaim. On the other hand, the performances of Tariq Anam Khan, Shamol Mawla, and Tupur in Anam Biswas' *Virus* were well-received by the audience.

Tanim Rahman Angshu's web-series *Buker Moddhye Agun*, featuring Apurba, Tama Mirza, Yash Rohan, and Shahnaz Sumi, became embroiled in controversy as the plot was accused of being taken from the life of the late Superstar Salman Shah. In response to this, the actor's family issued a legal notice to the producers. However, the project associates denied any connection between the series and Salman Shah's life.

NEWS

Second-time infection

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He added that developing and upgrading the primary healthcare system is also required so that patients would not need to crowd hospitals.

"Meanwhile, the government should develop secondary health facilities as well for critical patients to be treated there... City corporation hospitals and railway hospitals can be used as such facilities."

Mushtaq further suggested the setting up of more blood collection

centres in Dhaka for dengue patients.

Outside the capital, he said, the government needs to develop the upazila health complexes and community clinics for tests and treatment with more equipment and manpower.

Nazmul Ahsan said the government needs to focus on improving dengue treatment and management at both rural and city levels, and facilitate the relevant authorities in this regard.

"Detecting dengue hotspots and breeding grounds early on is also

important."

DGHS's Ahmedul Kabir said a National Strategic Plan has been prepared, highlighting the involvement of entomologists, responsibilities of relevant ministries, and the need for a multisectoral approach and community engagement, to tackle the dengue menace.

"We'll send it to the health ministry soon. If it accepts the plan, then we can take initiative early and put it into effect before next year's outbreak."

AL promises getting bigger

FROM PAGE 1

The 98-page manifesto lays emphasis on controlling the prices of essentials, building a smart Bangladesh based on the use of modern technology, increasing investment on farming, expanding the industries, and empowering the financial sector including banks.

Affordable healthcare for low-income people, wider universal pension scheme, accountability of law enforcement agencies, eradication of communalism and militancy, and democratic practice at all levels are also promised.

A smart economy, smart government, smart society, and smart citizens will be the four pillars of smart Bangladesh.

If voted to power, the party will continue its policy of zero-tolerance for corruption and take strict measures against illegal wealth, bribery, nepotism and abuse of power.

Those running propaganda abroad and misrepresenting the human rights situation in Bangladesh will be dealt with an iron hand while misuse of the cybersecurity act will be prevented.

The government will confiscate illegal money, assets, and bring laundered assets from abroad.

In the chapter titled "good governance", the party pledges to establish transparency, accountability, and good governance while encouraging educated, skilled, smart and honest people to participate in politics.

The AL's 2014 manifesto promised

to ensure accountability of the lawmakers for their activities in and outside parliament. Its 2018 manifesto and the latest one made no mention of the matter.

The 2008 manifesto said the AL would end extrajudicial killings and make public the wealth statements and income sources of the prime minister and all the MPs. The promises had not appeared in the following manifestos.

In the new manifesto, the AL pledges to create jobs for 1.5 crore people by 2030 so that the unemployment rate comes down to 3 percent. Many of the jobs will be created through industrialisation.

Poverty rate will be lowered to 11 percent by 2028 and 3 percent by 2041 while extreme poverty will be a thing of the past by 2031.

Power generation capacity will reach 40,000MW by 2030 and 60,000MW by 2041 while 10,000MW will be produced from clean sources and rental and inefficient power plants will be phased out.

There will be 12 expressways by 2041, and functional metro routes from Airport-Kamalapur, Notun Bazar-Purbachal Depot, Gabatli-Kanchpur Bridge, Kamalapur-Narayanganj, and Savar-Bhatara by 2030.

Citizens will get health IDs and there will be a system of universal health care.

Before the 2018 election, AL promised to form a National Commission for Minorities and enact the Minorities Protection Act. But the party hardly took any visible

measures to fulfil its promises.

The new manifesto says the AL will ensure 33 percent participation of women in politics and make it mandatory to use environment-friendly and biodegradable plastic.

Regarding foreign policy, the AL vows to continue cooperation with India and play a robust role in forming the South Asia Task Force to combat terrorism and militancy.

The AL will also strengthen Bangladesh's relations with China for development finance and with Russia for the energy sector.

Govt to ensure free, fair polls

FROM PAGE 12

make the countries in the region weaker.

The minister said Bangladesh has taken a leadership role in the region and other countries acknowledge this.

He said Japan, South Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia are emerging as important partners in the region.

Momen said they want continuation of the democratic process in the country. "We don't want terrorism. These are the goals of the Western countries. We are with them."

Responding to a question, the minister said the US should apply its visa policy against those who are trying to obstruct the polls.

The US earlier announced that it would impose visa restrictions on Bangladeshis for undermining the democratic election process.

Independent, 4 others hurt in clash with AL pick's supporters

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On information, police rushed to the scene and brought the situation under control, said Anwar Hossain, officer in charge of Khetlal Police Station.

Police were investigating the incident.

The Daily Star could not reach Swapan for comments as he did not answer phone calls yesterday.

In Chattogram-II, independent aspirant Ziaul Hoque Suman alleged that one of his makeshift campaign offices was set on fire by some supporters of AL nominee MA Latif in the port city's Mailer Matha area on Tuesday night.

Visiting the scene, police found that a banner and a portion of the

office were burnt, said Mahmudul Hasan, assistant commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

He said police were probing the incident.

This newspaper could not reach Latif over the phone for comments.

In Gazipur-3, AL candidate Rumana Ali Toosi yesterday filed a complaint with the returning officer over torching a campaign office in Sreepur's Narayanpur area on Tuesday night.

RO Abul Fateh Mohammad Safiqul Islam, also the deputy commissioner of Gazipur, said they would investigate the complaint.

In Cox's Bazar-3, an auto-rickshaw, used for campaigning for independent Mizan Sayeed,

was vandalised allegedly by some supporters of AL candidate Saimum Sarwar Komol MP in Ramu by-pass area yesterday evening.

However, Komol denied the allegation.

In Jamalpur-5, a campaign office of independent aspirant Rezaul Karim Reznul and the house of one of his supporters were vandalised allegedly by some supporters of AL nominee Abul Kalam Azad in Kasharupara village on Tuesday night.

Azad, however, refuted the allegations.

Md Sohrab Hossain, additional superintendent of Jamalpur police, said legal action would be taken after conducting an investigation into those incidents.

'Worse than genocide'

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"Netanyahu's plan is to get rid of the Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority," Abbas said.

The UN Security Council, in a resolution last week, called for the "safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale".

The resolution, which did not call for an immediate end to the fighting, effectively leaves Israel with operational oversight of aid deliveries.

In Rafah, hundreds turned up at the Abdul Salam Yassin water company carrying baskets, pulling handcarts and even pushing a wheelchair stacked with bottles to

queue for clean water.

Violence has also flared across the occupied West Bank, with more than 310 Palestinians killed by Israeli troops or settlers since latest conflict started on October 7, according to the territory's health ministry.

An Israeli operation in a refugee camp in the north of the West Bank left six people dead early yesterday, it said.

The conflict has reverberated across the Middle East, drawing in armed groups backed by Israel's arch foe Iran in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

An Israeli air strike on a Lebanon border town killed a Hezbollah

fighter, the group said yesterday, with state media reporting two of his relatives were also killed.

In Syria, an Israeli strike Monday killed Iranian general Razi Mousavi, a senior commander in the Quds Force, the foreign operations arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Iran has vowed to avenge the death of Mousavi, whose body was due to be repatriated for burial after memorial prayers at the Shia holy sites in Iraq.

Yemen's Huthi rebels have repeatedly fired at Israel and at passing cargo ships in the Red Sea in attacks in solidarity with Hamas.

29 more BNP-Jamaat activists

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According to the case statement, a bus was torched on the Jagannath University campus on January 21, 2015, during a hartal called by BNP-led 20 party alliance.

Noor Mohammad, then proctor of the university, filed the case with Kotwali Police Station.

In another case, magistrate Rajesh handed down jail sentences

to 13 BNP-Jamaat activists for four years and seven others for two years over political violence in September 2018.

Among the convicts are SM Fazlul Haque, BNP's Khilkhet unit president, and Jahir Uddin Babu, general secretary of Khilkhet unit of Swechhchhesebak Dal.

The court recorded statements of five prosecution witnesses in the

case. The case statement said a group of BNP-Jamaat men illegally assembled near the 300 feet road in Khilkhet on September 30, 2018.

They blasted crude bombs and barred police from performing duties, demanding release of Khaleda.

SI Abdur Rob filed the case with Khilkhet Police Station.