



Mosharraf Karim



Nasir Uddin Khan



Ziaul Faruq Apurba



FS Nayeem

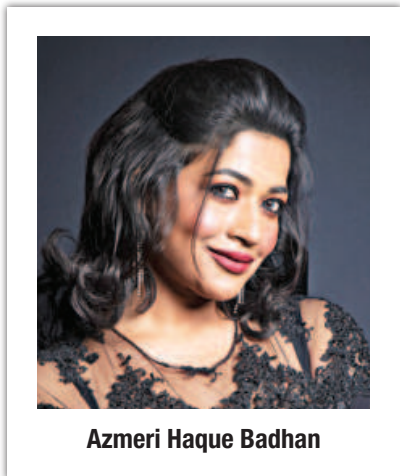


Shamol Mawla

The year 2023 was a milestone for Bangladesh's OTT industry, showcasing groundbreaking projects that pushed the boundaries of storytelling and established the platform as a major cultural force. This year's *Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT and Digital Content Awards* highlights these achievements, celebrating standout performances, captivating stories, and visionary direction in the Bangladeshi digital streaming landscape. With nominees from platforms like Chorki, Hoichoi, Binge, and Deepto Play, this awards season honours the creators who captured audiences' imaginations. Here's a look at this year's nominees in the popular categories:



## Who will audiences crown as the ultimate OTT STAR OF 2023?



Azmeri Haque Badhan



Rafiath Rashid Mithila



Tasnia Farin

### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

#### BEST ACTOR, MALE

This year's male leads brought intense performances to the screen. FS Nayeem captivated viewers in *Mission Hunt Down* (Chorki), while Mosharraf Karim's role in *Mohanagar 2* (Hoichoi) was highly lauded. Nasir Uddin Khan received a nod for his unforgettable portrayal in *Myself Allen Swapan* (Chorki), and Ziaul Faruq Apurba earned a nomination for his role as Golam Mamun in *Buker Moddhye Agun* (Hoichoi). Shamol Mawla's performance in *The Silence* (Binge) rounds out this fiercely competitive category.

#### BEST ACTRESS, FEMALE

In the female category, Azmeri Haque Badhan is recognised for her stellar performance in *Guti* (Chorki), alongside Rafiath Rashid Mithila for *Myself Allen Swapan* (Chorki). Tasnia Farin in *Nikosh* (Deepto Play), Tama Mirza in *Friday* (Binge), and Shahnaz Sumi in *Mobaraknama* (Hoichoi) also brought depth to their roles, showcasing the range and complexity of female characters in Bangladeshi OTT.

#### BEST ANTAGONIST

For memorable villain roles, Mostafa Monwar's intense portrayal in *Procholito* (Chorki) and Nasir Uddin Khan's performance in *Guti* (Chorki) stand out. Also nominated are Afran Nisho for *Sharey Showlo* (Hoichoi), Irfan Sajjad for *Baba Someone's Following Me* (Binge), and Abdun Noor Shajal for *The Silence* (Binge).

#### BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

In the male supporting category, FS Nayeem's role in *Overtrump* (Chorki) and Shashwata Datta in *Punormilone*

(Chorki) lead the nominations, along with Abu Hurayra Tansir, Dibya Joyti, and Partho Sheikh for their contributions to various series. For female supporting roles, Mousumi Hamid for *Guti* (Chorki) and Bijori Barkatullah for *The Silence* (Binge) are nominated, along with Tanzika Amin, Makhnun Sultana Mahima, and Shilpi Sarkar Apu for their compelling performances.

#### BEST DIRECTOR, SERIES

The Best Director (Series) category includes Vicky Zahed for *Ami ki Tumi* (iScreen), Shihab Shaheen for *Myself Allen Swapan* (Chorki), Ashfaque Nipun for *Mohanagar 2* (Hoichoi), Shankha Dasgupta for *Guti* (Chorki), and Taneem Rahman Angshu for *Buker Moddhye Agun* (Hoichoi), recognising these directors' contributions to storytelling.

#### BEST DIRECTOR, FILM

Film directors nominated for their

creative direction include Shihab Shaheen for *Baba Someone's Following Me* (Binge), Rubel Hasan for *Nikosh* (Deepto Play), Vicky Zahed for *Kajoler Dinratri* (Deepto Play), Mizanur Rahman Aryan for *Unish20* (Chorki), and Raihan Rafi for *Friday* (Binge).

#### TOP HONOURS IN DRAMA AND FILM

In the Best Drama/ Series category, nominees include *Myself Allen Swapan* (Chorki), *Guti* (Chorki), *Mohanagar 2* (Hoichoi), *Ami ki Tumi* (iScreen), and *Mobaraknama* (Hoichoi). Best Film nominees are *Punormilone* (Chorki), *Unish20* (Chorki), *Friday* (Binge), *Baba Someone's Following Me* (Binge), and *Nikosh* (Deepto Play).

The awards ceremony promises to be an exciting celebration of Bangladesh's OTT industry, recognising talent and creativity that has set new standards in digital content.

Voting is open from today (October 31) until November 30—don't forget to vote for your favourites. For more information on voting, please visit <https://ottcawards.thedailystar.net/>



Shahnaz Sumi

Tama Mirza

## BTS' Suga sets record with 15m YouTube likes



BTS member Min Yoongi, known more widely as Suga, has achieved a milestone as the first solo K-pop artiste to surpass 15 million likes on a YouTube music video, joining the ranks of rappers like Eminem, Drake, PSY, and XXXTentacion.

Suga's 2020 hit *Daechwita* from his album *D-2* secured him a place in YouTube's 15-million-likes club. The song blends traditional Korean musical elements with contemporary hip-hop. The music video has amassed 460 million views on YouTube.

Named after the traditional Korean music used in royal processions, *Daechwita* delves into themes of ambition, self-exploration, and determination.

The 31-year-old rapper is presently completing his military duty in South Korea alongside his BTS bandmates RM, Jimin, V, and Jungkook.



## 'Bachelor Point' teases anticipated return with new season

Directed by Kajal Arefin Ome, *Bachelor Point* has become one of the most popular shows in recent years. Speculation about a new season has been building, and Ome recently fuelled excitement by hinting at its production.

In recent Facebook posts, the director and other team members of the project mentioned the word "Five."

According to Ome, Season 5 may premiere early next year and will bring back fan-favourite characters such as Pasha, Habu, Shuvo, Kabila, and Antora.

Discussing the timeline, Ome commented, "I might make *Bachelor Point 5*. However, I can't specify exactly when viewers will be able to watch it, as everything is still being finalised."

Since its debut in 2017, the series has charmed audiences with its hilarious story centred around a group of bachelors. The fourth season concluded with its 116th episode on December 24, 2022.

PHOTOS: STAR AND COLLECTED

## Exploring South Asian folklore in horror films



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

As Halloween is here, the eerie atmosphere stirs not only a fascination with the supernatural but also a deeper exploration of how folklore and myth have been immortalised in art, literature, and, especially, films. South Asia, with its rich cultural traditions, offers a vast source of ghost stories, demonic legends, and spiritual mysteries.

One of the most pervasive themes in South Asian horror is the figure of the vengeful spirit, particularly the 'churail' or 'petni', female ghosts born of betrayal or injustice. These spirits often symbolise the deep-seated anxieties around gender, power, and societal repression. In folklore, these women were wronged during their lives, often suffering violence or injustice, and returned from the dead to seek revenge. In the Indian horror comedy *Stree* (2018), the *churail* is reimagined, turning a folklore-based ghost into a feminist symbol. The film cleverly plays with the fear surrounding these spirits while commenting on the societal

treatment of women.

Possession, often by 'jinns' or malevolent spirits, is another deeply rooted theme in South Asian storytelling. The idea that one's body could be overtaken by supernatural forces reflects cultural concerns over control, particularly the loss of personal agency. One such film, *Debi* (2018), explores the theme of possession, where the protagonist, Ranu, has inexplicable visions and encounters with a deity-like figure. The film draws on the belief in the supernatural powers of certain individuals, especially women, who are seen as mediums for divine or spiritual entities. This reflects the folklore surrounding *devi* possession or spiritual enlightenment, where women are often depicted as having a deeper connection to the supernatural, either as goddesses, witches, or mediums.

The concept of curses that pass down through generations is also a recurring theme in South Asian folklore and has been adapted into film narratives. This idea of inescapable family curses was portrayed in *Tumbad* (2018), where a family's

greed invites the wrath of an ancient deity. South Asian horror films frequently delve into stories where ancestral curses are revisited upon current generations, forcing characters to reckon with their past. These themes align closely with the Hindu-Buddhist concept of *karma*, where the moral consequences of past actions reverberate into the present.

This folklore is filled with stories of shape-shifters, particularly the *nagini* (serpent woman) and *rakshasas* (demonic beings), who can alter their forms to deceive humans. These creatures embody the fear of the unknown and the anxiety surrounding deception and transformation. *Hava* (2022), set at sea, delves into the mystical world of supernatural forces tied to the waters. As a group of fishermen embarks on a journey, strange occurrences unfold, with one of the crew members suspected of being a *nagini* or sea spirit. These figures often reflect societal fears around the control of women's sexuality and the power that comes with it.

In *Bhool Bhulaiyaa* (2007),

reincarnation and past lives are used to explain the supernatural events. The film explores the concept that unresolved issues from past lives can carry over into the present and that spirits may linger until they find closure. This reflects Hindu beliefs about the cycle of life, death, and rebirth, where unresolved karma can haunt individuals across lifetimes.

South Asian folklore places significant emphasis on haunted spaces—abandoned houses, desolate palaces, and cursed villages—where spirits are said to linger. These places are often depicted as being imbued with the trauma and pain of those who once lived there. In *Chompa House* (2022), the plot revolves around a family house that holds dark secrets and possibly a curse passed down through generations. The house itself becomes a character, much like the haunted spaces in South Asian folklore that carry the weight of past trauma and unresolved family issues.

Horror films, deeply rooted in South Asian folklore, hence truly provide a fascinating lens into cultural fears, spiritual beliefs, and societal anxieties.

## Anirban Bhattacharya to debut his band

Anirban Bhattacharya who successfully captivates audiences on screen and stage, with acting seemingly in his blood, is also a talented singer.

The actor, trained in stage singing from an early age, gained acclaim for songs like *Kichchu Chaini Aami* in *Shah Jahan Regency* and *Michael Vidyasagar Sangbad* with Anupam Roy. Credited as a vocalist in multiple films, he's received praise for live performances.

Now, he's set to join the music scene in a new role with his band, Hooliganism, formed with longtime friends.

The band, led by Anirban and music director Subhadeep Guha, features nine members, including Debraj Bhattacharya, Sushruta Goswami, Someswar Bhattacharya, Krishanu Ghosh, Nilansuk Datta, Pritam Das, and Pritam Deb Sarkar.

Hooliganism will debut with original Bengali songs written by Anirban, who informed the media, "Our nine-member band has recorded 12 songs, now being mixed. We've done a few trial shows with great audience feedback."

The freshly formed band will make its official debut at a Kolkata gallery this December.

