



# LOOKING BACK AT 2024

## OTT content that kept us subscribed

As 2024 comes to a close, it leaves behind a trail of events and milestones, including notable contributions from Bangladesh's OTT platforms (Over-the-Top). Let's revisit some of the year's most talked-about works on the interweb.

SAEED KHAN SHAGOR

### Web-films

#### KACHER MANUSH DURE THUIYA

Part of Chorki's much anticipated Ministry of Love anthology series, this Shihab Shaheen directorial explores the intricacies of long-distance relationships, portraying their merits and challenges in a unique manner. The narrative delves into the complexities of relationships through various characters' perspectives, making it a commendable romantic project rooted in realism. Featuring Pritom Hasan and Tasnia Farin, the film's humour resonated widely on social media throughout the year, with memes and relatable storylines connecting viewers to its themes.

#### FORGET ME NOT

Premiering on Chorki in September, *Forget Me Not* received critical acclaim

for its exploration of how modern relationships are shaped by factors like economic disparities, political ideologies, familial conflicts, career aspirations, and varying ambitions. It also highlights the dynamics between partners with differing goals and aspirations, offering audiences a fresh perspective on familiar dilemmas. Starring Yash Rohan and Mehazabien Chowdhury, the Robiul Alam Robi directorial captivated audiences with its emotional depth and aesthetic appeal.

#### LAST DEFENDERS OF MONOGAMY

This Ministry of Love entry by Mostofa Sarwar Farooki follows the story of a seemingly ideal man—a devoted husband, loving father, and respected boss—who unexpectedly finds himself infatuated with a new colleague. While the relationship never fully blossoms, the film uses the metro rail as a central metaphor, symbolising the duplicity and moral compromises of urban relationships. Farooki's

experimental narrative critiques modern mediocrity with the poignant observation: "We are modern, but mediocre." Featuring Chanchal Chowdhury and Xefar Rahman, the film offers a thought-provoking take on contemporary love.

#### OSHOMOY

Released on Bongo, *Oshomoy* delves into the struggles of middle-class families, capturing the disconnect between aspirations and reality, power imbalances, and societal challenges. Directed by Kajal Arefin Omi, this family drama examines the evolution of familial crises from the 1990s to the 21st century. While the rushed courtroom scenes and occasional plot loopholes detract slightly, Tasnia Farin's portrayal of a university freshman anchors the film, vividly depicting middle-class struggles and transitions.

#### MAYA

Binge released *Maya*, marking Sarika's dazzling return after a long hiatus. Directed by Raihan Rafi, the film begins with a woman's determined quest to find her disappeared husband at a police station. The narrative evolves into a tale of resilience, exploring the societal and familial adversities faced in her husband's absence. Imon and Sarika deliver compelling performances, supported by a dynamic background score that heightens suspense. Despite minor narrative flaws, Rafi's storytelling strikes an emotional chord, leaving a lasting impression.

### Web-series

#### KAALPURUSH

Directed by Salzar Rahman, *Kaalpurush* is a gripping three-hour web series. With a unique take on time travel, it features Chanchal Chowdhury's enigmatic performance alongside contrasting portrayals by Imtiaz Barshon and FS Nayeem as police officers. Tanzika Amin's role as a family-oriented character adds depth to this intricately designed series, which captivates viewers despite some logical gaps.

#### GOLAM MAMUN

A spin-off from *Buker Modhye Agun*, this Shihab Shaheen directorial tells the story of Golam Mamun (Ziaul Faruque Apurba), a police officer turned fugitive implicated in double murders. The series unfolds into a gripping narrative of crime, betrayal, and political intrigue. Imtiaz Barshon's portrayal of Officer Robin received widespread acclaim, while Sabila Nur, Rashed Mamun Apu, and Masum Bashar delivered notable performances. However, the series' commentary on the supremacy of syndicates and systemic flaws risks leaving viewers with the misleading message: "A qualified ruler is a myth."

#### RONGILA KITAB

Directed by Anam Biswas, this Hoichoi

series centres on Pradip, a Barishal-based goon who promises his pregnant wife to abandon his life of crime. However, a high-profile murder and ensuing riots force him into a tragic decision. The series tackles themes like political power struggles and border conflicts, with Mostafizur Noor Imran excelling as Pradip and Pori Moni delivering a stellar performance as his wife, Shupti.

#### SINPAAT

Touqir Islam's *Sinpaat*, a seven-episode series on Chorki, continues his exploration of the Rajshahi region. Following the criminal escapades of Fazu and Shohel, the story unfolds with raw intensity as the duo struggles to escape their past. Real-life former criminal Sohail Sheikh and actor Rifat Bin Manik received acclaim for their authentic portrayals in this gritty narrative.

#### FRENZY

Directed by Jahid Pritom, *Frenzy* is a Binge Original that offers a refreshing departure from violence-centric Bangladeshi web series. Balancing moments of joy and sorrow, it explores relationships, red flags, and friendships in a feel-good narrative. Featuring Abu Huraira Tanvir, Sabrin Azad, Partho Sheikh, and Aisha Khan, the series transitions from a family-focused story to the lives of four young people navigating new beginnings, delivering a heartwarming tale of connection and growth.

# APURBA to star in 'Chaalchitro' sequel

Ziaul Faruq Apurba made his Tollywood debut last week with Pratim D. Gupta's film *Chaalchitro*. Just a week after its release, the sequel has been announced, and according to reports by Hindustan Times Bangla, the director has confirmed that Apurba will reprise his role.

In *Chaalchitro*, released on December 20, Apurba portrays a mysterious character who adds twists and turns to the plot.

Not only Apurba, but actors from the first part—Tota Roy Chowdhury, Anirban Chakrabarti, Bratya Basu, and Shantanu Maheshwari—will also return for the next instalment.

Apurba is currently in the United States. According to the director, he will join the shooting for the new instalment of *Chaalchitro* as soon as he returns. The director also mentioned that, for now, the film is scheduled for release around next year's Durga Puja or Christmas.



# TAYLOR SWIFT'S record-breaking 2024

Taylor Swift had an extraordinary 2024, solidifying her position as a global icon. From winning the Grammy for Album of the Year with *Midnights* to releasing her 11th studio album, *The Tortured Poets Department*, she made headlines throughout the year. In addition, her historic *Eras Tour*, high-profile appearances alongside Travis Kelce, and her title as Spotify's most-streamed artiste made her a dominant force in music and pop culture.

Taylor's meteoric rise this year has taken her

fame to unprecedented heights, reaching a level of stardom rarely seen in recent times.

The *Eras Tour* was undoubtedly the highlight of Taylor's year. Starting in Glendale, Arizona, in March 2023 and resuming in Paris in May 2024, the record-breaking tour made a significant impact on global economies. According to Forbes, her London shows alone generated £300 million, while her Melbourne stops contributed an estimated AUD \$1.2 billion.



# James Gunn defends 'THE BATMAN' sequel delay

DC Studios co-chairman James Gunn defended the delay of *Batman 2*, describing it as a typical part of sequel production. Gunn pointed to the long gaps between sequels of major films like *Alien*, *The Incredibles*, *Terminator*, *Avatar*, and *Top Gun* to justify the decision.

Warner Bros has officially postponed the release of *Batman 2* by a year, with the film now set to hit theatres globally on October 1, 2027, according to Deadline.

James Gunn defended the delay, noting that long gaps between sequels are common. "To be fair, a 5-year gap or more is typical for sequels," he wrote, citing examples like *Alien* (7 years), *The Incredibles* (14 years), *Terminator* (7 years), *Avatar* (13 years), *Top Gun* (36 years), and *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2 and Vol 3* (6 years).