

EMBRACING 2025

What to look forward to?

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

While 2024's July Revolution shook the showbiz industry, it still fights on in a battle of existence. What can we expect from various sectors of Entertainment in 2025? Let's have a look.

battle for control over immense wealth, involving mafia bosses, politicians, and businessmen. Featuring an impressive cast including Puja Chery, Rubel, Intekhab Dinar,

transformation. The series will also see celebrated Indian actor Saswata

unaware of the others. The series is currently listed in the 'coming soon' section on Hoichoi.

Music 2024 was a crucial year for musicians. More than the releases

Theater and Exhibitions
2024 has been a turbulent year for Bangladesh's theatre scene, marked by political unrest, cancelled plays, and leadership changes. The July uprising led to the resignation of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's longest serving Director General, Liaquat Ali Lucky, with Dr Syed Jamil Ahmed stepping in. As the year closes, the Academy, central to the country's cultural fabric, is preparing for a new phase of growth, initiating reforms to address long-standing challenges.

A new committee is working to ensure the Academy's regulations align with its mission as an autonomous institution for arts practice and research. Plans also include the establishment of a "Conservatory Cell" to nurture emerging talent and support indigenous communities.

Looking ahead, Shilpakala Academy has over 60 cultural events planned for January alone and countless others all throughout the new year around the country. Leading theatre groups such as Prachyanat, Swapnadal, and Aranyak Natyadal are preparing for an exciting year. Prachyanat's popular productions like *Achalayatan* and



The cast of 'Ghumpori'.

A major highlight for the year is the return of Allen Swapan, with director Shihab Shaheen and actor Nasir Uddin Khan teaming up once again. OTT is looking to register its strongest yet, with a newfound freedom of speech.

Films
2025 seems to be the year for action packed cinemas. After a short hiatus, Afran Nisho will star in and as *Dagi* in Shihab Shaheen's redemption-themed film, sparking excitement among fans eager to see him reunite with Tama Mirza on-screen. Another highly anticipated project is Raihan Rafi's *Lion*, featuring Kolkata's superstar Jeet alongside Bangladesh's Sariful Razz. The film will mostly be shot in jungles and sea.

Other films like *Kobi*, *Chokkor 302*, *Jongli* and *Esha Murder* were supposed to be released in 2024, but they were mostly halted due to some technical issues. However, this year we might witness all this film coming together in theaters.

An Eid without Shakib Khan's film is unimaginable, and thus, we can look forward to two movies this year. Mehedi Hassan Hridoy's *Borbaad* is scheduled to be released on Eid-ul-Fitr. Raihan Rafi and Shakib Khan will be coming together once again for the high-octane film *Tandob*. It is set to be released on Eid-ul-Azha.

Salahuddin Lavlu, Pavel, Mukit Zakaria and Sumon Anwar, the film promises intense drama and action.

Another project to look out for is Vicky Zahed's *Ondhokarer Gaan*, starring Abul Hayat, Mosharraf Karim, Zakia Bari Mamo, and Shahnaz Sumi. The narrative revolves around Mosharraf Karim's character.

Chorki has unveiled an exciting lineup of content for audiences to anticipate. Leading the charge is the original series *Feu*, inspired by true events. The gripping storyline centers around a harrowing incident where four to five thousand people were killed within three days. Directed by Sukorno Shahed Dhiman, the series features a stellar cast including Chanchal Chowdhury, Tariq Anam Khan, and Mostafizur Noor Imran in key roles, alongside Tanvir Apurbo, Hossain Jibon, Tahmina Othoi, and local artistes from Khulna.

Another notable project is the web-film *Jaha Bolibo Mittha Bolibo*, which draws from real-life crossfire incidents. This film marks the return of acclaimed actor Zahid Hasan to Chorki, under the direction of Raihan Rafi.

Chatterjee making his debut as the lead in a Bangladeshi web project.

Audiences can soon witness a unique love story unfold on Chorki. Directed by Zahid Pritom, the film stars fan favorites Tanjin Tisha, Pritom Hasan, and Parsha Mahjabeen. The web film is titled *Ghumpori*.

Several more films from *Ministry of Love* are expected to release in 2025. Chorki has announced that content

themselves, the bravery of the musical fraternity in forming *Get Up, Stand Up* to rise against the authoritarian government was the highlight of the year. However, rising political uncertainty has led to the diminishing number of shows being hosted countrywide. January 2025



Hill Film Festival



Feu



Intersheep 2



Snippet from a play by 'Swapnadal'



A snippet from 'Khowabnama'.

OTT Raihan Rafi's *Black Money* is set to premiere on Bongo on January 2. The series explores the fierce and dangerous

Syed Ahmed Shawki joins forces with Chorki for the first time with his political thriller web series *Gulmohar*, exploring themes of power, politics, and

based on the July-August movements will also be produced.

A major highlight for the year is the return of *Allen Swapan*, with director Shihab Shaheen and actor Nasir Uddin Khan teaming up once again. Additionally, the hit series *Intersheep* will return for a second season. Directed by Rezaur Rahman, the new season promises to bring even more fresh comedic moments.

New content will start streaming on Chorki from the night of January 1. The platform's first release of 2025 will be *Antora*, the third episode of the Chorki original series *Dui Shaw*, directed by Nuhsh Humayun.

Meanwhile, under the direction of Amitabh Reza Chowdhury, *Bohemian Ghora* tells the story of Abbas, a truck driver played by Mosharraf Karim, who secretly maintains seven wives across seven districts. Each wife remains

will start with Bappa Mazumder's mellifluous voice, as he performs at the Yamaha Flagship center on the 3rd. Pakistani artiste Kaavish and Indian playback sensation Sunidhi Chauhan will perform in Dhaka on January 10 and 11, in an event called *Dhaka Dreams*. Bangladeshi acts Arnob, Armeen Musa and Level Five will also be a part of the concert. We also look forward to previously shadow-banned artistes, including the likes of Asif Akbar, Ethun Babu and Baby Naznin to integrate once again into the industry and give us new tracks. Rap music has been on the forefront of the July revolution, so we are sure to see more defiant hits from the likes of Shezan and Hannan. On the band music front, we are soon to get a new EP from Ershad Zaman's band, EZ. The former Artcell lead guitarist has confirmed the news to The Daily Star himself.

Kinu Kaharer Thetar will be staged nationwide. Swapnadal will also host the *Natyacharya Selim Al Deen Smaran Utsab 2025* festival to commemorate the 17th death anniversary of theatre legend Selim Al Deen. Swapnadal will also continue staging *Chitrangada*, *Helen Keller*, and *Macbeth* in the coming year with special arrangements on Hiroshima Day and International Women's Day.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka phase of the Hill Film Festival will run from January 2-5 at Shala: Neighbourhood Art Space and Drik, celebrating diverse cinematic voices, particularly Indigenous languages. The Alliance Française de Dhaka will present *Aubak Jolpan*, a puppet show by Jolputal Puppets, on January 7. Additionally, Edge Gallery and EMK Centre will host exhibitions showcasing the vibrant culture and creativity of Bangladesh.

'Squid Game 2' tops Netflix charts worldwide



Squid Game was expected to be a massive hit when it returned for Season 2, considering Season 1 was by far the most-watched Netflix series. However, it has created another massive record.

According to Forbes, while exact viewership numbers are yet to be determined, *Squid Game* Season 2 has made history as the first series to debut at #1 in all 93 Netflix regions, including the US, India, and Thailand, drawing unprecedented global attention in its own pace.

Squid Game Season 1 amassed 265.2 million views on Netflix, translating to approximately 2.2 billion hours watched. It holds the top spot on Netflix's list of the most popular shows, not only among non-English series but across the entire platform.

However, despite topping Netflix, *Squid Game* Season 2 has a lower audience score on Rotten Tomatoes, dropping to 65% compared to Season 1's 83%.

NO ROOM FOR EGO

Swastika on embracing new roles

"To grow as an actress, one must leave the city, set aside their ego, and be willing to go anywhere," said Swastika Mukherjee, whose 24-year career has seen her seamlessly transition between Tollywood and Bollywood, excelling across films and web series alike.

Swastika Mukherjee recently shared a heartfelt post alongside a collection of photos. She reflected, "Despite a 24-year-long career, I still attend auditions. I am thankful for my curious and eager nature. I continue to explore new roles in a different city, seeking opportunities to enrich my life."

Swastika is known as one of Tollywood's most outspoken actresses, a reputation shaped by critics. To her admirers, she is a powerhouse of talent, passionate about quality cinema and seeking compelling roles across the industry, regardless of geography.

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie settle divorce after eight years



Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt have finalised their divorce, reported Jolie's lawyer James Simon last Monday.

Marking the conclusion of one of Hollywood's most prolonged and controversial divorce battles, Simon

confirmed to The Associated Press that the duo reached an agreement.

Simon stated that Jolie filed for divorce from Pitt over eight years ago, and since then, she and the children have left the properties, with Jolie focusing on bringing peace and healing to their family.

Although their divorce settlement is final, the former couple are still in a legal battle over the Chateau Miraval vineyard, with Pitt alleging that Jolie sold her share to the Stoli Group without his approval.

Jolie filed for divorce in September 2016, two years after marrying Pitt following a decade of togetherness.