

‘People held me and cried’: Dighi on ‘Jongli’s’ impact

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Jongli, a breakout film this year, isn’t just riding high tides at the box office—it’s leaving audiences visibly shaken. Actress Prarthana Fardin Dighi, who plays the emotionally complex character Nupur, shared how the film moved viewers to tears and sparked heartfelt conversations long after the credits rolled.

Released during Eid ul-Fitr, the M Raahim directorial **Jongli** featured Dighi with celebrated actors Siam Ahmed and Shobnom Bubby. The film—still drawing crowds weeks after release—is also poised to debut internationally later this month.

“It’s been years since we’ve had so many well-received simultaneous Eid releases,” Dighi told The Daily Star. “Most of the films are doing well, and that’s something to celebrate as an actor and fan of cinema.”

Among the season’s successes, she pointed to **Chokkor 302**, a thriller that’s kept audiences on edge, **Borbaad**, which has made its undeniable mark, and **Daagi**, which she has yet to see but noted has drawn crowds. However, the actress believes **Jongli** stands out for its character-driven narrative. “People are watching it. They’re talking about it and they’re moved.”

Dighi has seen **Jongli** multiple times at the theatre.

“Every time I saw it, I felt like I was experiencing it for the first time,” she said. “I witnessed tears in the eyes of the audience whenever I visited to gauge their reactions. Some even held me, expressing how deeply they were moved by Nupur’s journey.”

During a screening at Lion Cinema Hall, she recalled being approached by audience members who told her, “Nupur didn’t do the right thing.” She stated, “That comment stayed with me, not as criticism, but as proof that the film’s emotional weight had struck home.”

“Cinema rarely evokes that kind of visceral reaction anymore, but **Jongli** did,” Dighi observed. “People I’ve never met have shown such empathy and connection to the story—it’s overwhelming.”

Dighi reserved high praise for her co-star Siam, calling him “an exceptional actor” who shows up for his team both in front of and behind the camera. “Siam’s commitment to his craft is evident in every scene. He ensures everyone on set is comfortable, often checking if anyone has missed a meal.”

Upon being inquired about what is next for her, Dighi remained tight-lipped but confirmed that she is discussing new projects. “Once everything is confirmed, I’ll be excited to share the news.”



PHOTO: COLLECTED

WHAT’S THE HAPS?

‘Decorated Deeds’

Alliance Française de Dhaka, in association with ARTCON, presents **Decorated Deeds** – Bangla Calligraphy on Antique Documents, the 20th solo exhibition by Arham ul Huq Chowdhury. Showcasing exquisite calligraphic artistry preserved in historic manuscripts, the exhibition offers a rare glimpse into Bengal’s rich visual and textual heritage.

Date: Friday-Saturday | April 25-26

Time: 3-9pm

Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi



Moushumi to perform at a cultural event in LA

Actress Arifa Parvin Zaman Moushumi is set to perform at the upcoming **Bangladesh Day Parade and Festival** in Los Angeles, organised by BUFOA to celebrate Bangladesh’s 55th year of independence.

She will be joined by singers Selim Chowdhury and Dinat Jahan Munni, with Anisur Rahman Milon and Nova Firoze hosting the event.

In addition to singing, Moushumi will also take part in a dance performance on April 27.

Grateful for the opportunity, she expressed her appreciation to BUFOA.

The festival, scheduled for April 26 and 27, has been organised annually by 29 Bangladeshi organisations since 2006 and is expected to draw hundreds of participants this year.



Demi Moore crowned People’s Most Beautiful Woman at 62

People Magazine has named 62-year-old Hollywood actress Demi Moore as its Most Beautiful Woman of 2025, challenging conventional beauty standards tied to youth.

The announcement, made on April 23 alongside the magazine’s May 5 digital cover, features Moore and an in-depth interview where she reflects on ageing and self-acceptance.

Known for her iconic roles in **Ghost**, **A Few Good Men**, **Indecent Proposal**, and **Striptease**, Moore shared her evolving relationship with her body, stating she now embraces a more intuitive and accepting outlook.

She returned to critical acclaim with **The Substance** after a significant hiatus, earning an Oscar nomination and a Golden Globe.



Rosé breaks barriers with non-Korean AMA nomination

The American Music Awards (AMAs) has announced its 2024 nominees, featuring stars like Beyoncé, Taylor Swift, and Post Malone.

Making history is Blackpink’s Rosé, who becomes the first K-pop artiste nominated outside the genre’s category, and the only female contender in the Favourite K-pop Artist category.

She’s up for Collaboration of the Year for **APT**, her hit track with Bruno Mars. Other contenders include Kendrick Lamar and SZA, Taylor Swift and Post Malone, among others.

APT, inspired by a Korean drinking game, has spent 26 weeks on the Billboard Hot 100 — a record for any female K-pop artiste.



NEWS

Meghna Alam denied bail

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against her were found to be true.

Meghna was shown arrested in the case on April 17 following a petition filed by its investigation officer Md Akhtar Morshed, an inspector of the police’s Detective Branch. Police filed the case against Meghna, her associate Dewan Samir and two others on April 15.

According to the case statement, Meghna and Samir, along with two to three unidentified others, are allegedly active members of an “organised fraud ring.”

They reportedly used “attractive” women to lure foreign diplomats and representatives of foreign missions in Bangladesh, as well as local businessmen, into romantic and illicit relationships and then applied various tactics to extort money by threatening to tarnish their reputation, the case statement said.

Samir is the CEO of the business organisation KAWAII Group. He is also the owner of Sanjana International, a manpower firm. He had previously owned a company called MIRI International Event Management Ltd.

As part of a scheme to gain access to foreign diplomats and businessmen, Samir allegedly appointed “attractive and smart” women as brand ambassadors, including Meghna, in his companies to use them to blackmail envoys and extract large sums of money, the case statement said.

Meghna was picked up from her residence in the city’s Bashundhara Residential Area on April 9. A day later, another Dhaka court ordered Meghna to be kept in jail for 30 days under the Special Powers Act of 1974 following an application by the Detective Branch.

Amid criticism of the police for the process of her arrest, the High Court on April 13 issued a rule asking relevant government authorities to explain in two weeks why her arrest under the Special Powers Act should not be declared illegal.

EC to carry out its own reforms

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Commission Ordinance 2025, which seeks to introduce criminal liability for election commissioners for failing to ensure fair elections. This provision would erode the commissioners’ independence and expose them to political pressure.

Yesterday, CEC Nasir Uddin said Australia has expressed its willingness to assist the EC in the upcoming national polls.

He said, “They [Australia] enquired about our preparations for the next parliamentary election whether we are satisfied with it. They also asked about reforms. We informed them about the reforms that are underway. They said that if we seek assistance, they are ready to support us. She [Australian high commissioner] assured us of all possible and necessary support.”

“We have completed the work on the voter list. We’ve initiated the procurement process. We also told her about the initiative taken regarding the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies.”

“We informed that the deadline for party registration has been extended

Ensure transparency to regain public trust

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our accountability... If we explore the relationship between doctors and pharmaceutical companies, it would bring us shame. We must look into this,” he said.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, said some of the profession’s image issues stem from doctors’ own limitations.

One such limitation is poor communication, which often leaves patients dissatisfied, he noted.

“When the quality of education among graduates from around 110 medical colleges varies greatly, people do not feel secure. It must be ensured that every medical graduate meets a minimum standard, and for that, a licensing system should be introduced.”

He also mentioned that two separate laws are in the works – one for the protection of doctors and medical institutions, and another for service recipients – and that a final push for

these will follow the submission of the Health Sector Reform Commission’s report.

However, he acknowledged that public perception contributes to the security threat facing doctors.

“People used to show the highest regard for doctors some 40-50 years ago. The shift in their perception is responsible for the current situation. Many believe they incur additional costs due to doctors’ affiliations with external organisations. We must address this perception.”

He added, “We need to be transparent on certain issues to challenge this perception. Transparency must be maintained in dealings with pharmaceutical companies, diagnostic laboratories, and hospitals. It can be our only form of immunity.”

“It’s true that our safety must be guaranteed by law. At the same time, we will feel more secure if we address the underlying issues that provoke distrust

and resentment among the public.”

National Professor A K Azad Khan, also the head of the Health Sector Reform Commission, said the medical profession is unique.

“The main issue is that you won’t be able to be a good doctor unless you are a good human being. We are supposed to be held in the highest regard. If that is no longer the case, then we must practise self-criticism,” he said, adding that doctors should work to earn greater public trust.

Prof Syed Atiqul Haque, a member of the reform commission, said the commission’s report is expected to meet the demands raised during the discussion regarding healthcare reforms. He added that the report may be submitted within a week.

Prof Mujibur Rahman Hawlader, pro-vice-chancellor of BMU, and Prof Nazmul Hossain, director general of the Directorate General of Medical Education, also spoke at the event.

People must get back

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held in Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, and Panchagarh yesterday.

Tarique said that in the struggle for restoring democracy, “Many leaders and activists have disappeared, been killed, or left permanently disabled over the past 15 years. Their sacrifices must not go in vain.”

He said children were killed during the July-August uprising and that their deaths were for the establishment of democracy.

“In no country, are children killed unless there is war? But during the July-August movement, we saw around 100 children killed... These children had no fault. Why did they make such sacrifices? Solely for the establishment of democracy.”

“There may be differences of opinion among us, and that’s natural. Differences are part of democracy. We will sit together, discuss, and move forward...”

Tarique said BNP seeks to implement reforms with public support.

“We have said before that reform is an ongoing process. If something stops at a certain point, it cannot be

‘Vladimir, STOP!’

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this week where he is expected to hold talks with Putin on a possible deal, his fourth since Trump returned to the White House in January.

Ukraine has been battered with aerial attacks throughout Russia’s three-year invasion but deadly strikes on Kyiv, better protected by air defences than other cities, are less common.

The attacks threw more doubt on already fraught US efforts to push Russia and Ukraine to agree to a ceasefire, with Trump having lashed out at Zelensky this week for not being willing to accept Russian occupation of Crimea, annexed by Moscow in 2014.

“We do everything that our partners have proposed, only what contradicts our legislation and the Constitution we cannot do,” Zelensky told reporters in South Africa in response to a question about Crimea.

Zelensky also questioned whether Kyiv’s allies were themselves doing enough to force Putin to agree to a full and unconditional ceasefire.

“I don’t see any strong pressure on Russia or any new sanctions packages against Russia’s aggression,” Zelensky said, highlighting that Trump had previously warned of repercussions

if Moscow did not agree to pause the fighting.

“The strikes must be stopped immediately and unconditionally,” Zelensky said, calling yesterday morning’s aerial assault “one of the most sophisticated, most brazen” of the entire war.

Loud blasts sounded over the Ukrainian capital at around 1:00am (2200 GMT) after air raid sirens rang out across Kyiv, AFP journalists on the ground said.

Russia fired at least 70 missiles and 145 drones at Ukraine between late Wednesday and early yesterday, the main target being Kyiv, the Ukrainian air force said.

Rescuers yesterday afternoon said 10 people were killed and 90 injured.

Russia said it had targeted Ukraine’s defence industry, including plants that produced “rocket fuel and gunpowder”.

Olena Davydiuk, a 33-year-old lawyer in Kyiv, told AFP she saw windows breaking and doors “falling out of their hinges” during the barrage.

“People were being pulled out of the rubble. They said that there were dead people there too,” she added.

In the Sviatoshinsky district in the west of Kyiv, an AFP journalist saw a body bag with one of the victims lain out on a strip of grass.

Pakistan FM postpones Dhaka trip

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Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“The new dates for the visit will be finalised through mutual consultations,” according to a message shared by the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka yesterday.

The development comes amid escalation of tension between India and Pakistan following a terrorist attack in Indian-controlled Kashmir that killed 26 tourists and injured at least 17 on April 22.

According to the diplomatic sources, Dar was scheduled to meet Bangladesh Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain and call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on April 28.

The two countries were also working on signing several memorandums of understanding.

Asif apologises

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verified Facebook page around 11:30am yesterday, expressing regret over his father’s actions and offering clarifications.

“Around 9:00pm last night [Wednesday], a journalist contacted me regarding a contractor’s licence issued in my father’s name. After speaking to my father, I confirmed that he had indeed obtained the licence at the district level [issued by the district executive engineer]. I shared this information with the journalist, who later published it,” the post read.

Asif acknowledged that the issue had sparked public discussion and criticism, prompting him to offer an explanation.

He explained that his father is a schoolteacher and that a local contractor, seeking to facilitate work opportunities using his father’s name, had advised him to obtain a licence. Acting on this advice, his father secured the licence.

“Any individual in the country is free to obtain a licence for business purposes. However, while I am responsible for the relevant ministry, my father’s involvement in the contracting business clearly constitutes a conflict of interest. After explaining the matter, the licence has been cancelled today [yesterday] following my father’s application,” Asif wrote.

The adviser also clarified that the licence had not been used to apply for any work in the meantime.