

Tanim Noor revives the 90s as 'Utshob' picks up steam

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SHARMIN JOYA

At a time when fast-paced, action-packed stories—often laced with violence, bloodshed, and moral ambiguity—dominate the big screen, Tanim Noor took a bold yet conventional risk this Eid-ul-Azha with his film *Utshob*.

Featuring not just a star-studded cast, *Utshob* also serves as a cinematic time capsule of the 1990s, stirring deep nostalgia for those who grew up in that era.

We reached out to director Tanim Noor to commend him for his bold creative choice and to learn more about the behind-the-scenes journey of *Utshob*—a film that truly captured the festive spirit of Eid.

"I'm elated by the response to the film," said Tanim Noor. "As audience appreciation grows, so does the demand, and for a director, it's incredibly rewarding when viewers genuinely relate to the story. I especially can't thank those who

are spreading the word about the film. It is because of them that viewership interest is expanding."

The film features beloved icons of the '90s—Zahid Hasan, Jaya Ahsan, Chanchal Chowdhury, Aupree Karim, Intekhab Dinar, and Afsana Mimi—whose presence instantly evokes nostalgia. They are joined by a fresh new pairing, Shoumya Joyti and Sadia Ayman. "Being a fan of Zahid Hasan *bhai* and getting the opportunity to direct him is truly a blessing," shared Tanim Noor.

Through this project, Tanim Noor reunited with Jaya Ahsan more than a decade after they collaborated in the 2011 film *Phirey Esho Behula*. "I consider it a great achievement that I was able to bring together such talented actors for my project," he proudly stated.

While audiences love seeing big stars come together on screen, producers and directors often face challenges, particularly scheduling conflicts and budget constraints, that make assembling star-studded lineups difficult. So, how did Tanim manage to pull it off?

He laughed and replied, "Money wasn't a big issue for me. I was lucky to align their schedules, and more importantly, they were all genuinely excited about the story."

Reflecting on his earlier film, he warmly added, "Even Humayun Faridee *bhai* didn't take any remuneration for *Phirey Esho Behula*. How could I ever repay that kind of love?"

The story, dialogue, and screenplay of

Utshob were crafted by Tanim Noor, Samiul Bhuiyan, Ayman Asib Shadhin and Sumsay Sarkar—a creative team that came together to adapt Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, reimagining it entirely within a Bangladeshi context and setting. This film became a nostalgic treat for every 90s kid. In addition to that, the veteran actors' impeccable comic timing and charming self-deprecating humour, along with surprisingly layered performances from the newcomers, make

Utshob a truly well-rounded cinematic experience, according to audiences who have already watched the film.

Born and raised in Dhaka during the 1980s and 90s, director Tanim Noor often finds himself reminiscing about that era with his close circle of friends. *Utshob*, which blends both period and contemporary elements, is infused with the emotional essence of that generation. He believes this generational flavour offered a sense of relief—a breath of fresh air—for audiences navigating the lingering trauma and frustration in the aftermath of the July uprising.

"Mostly, people can enjoy the film with their family and friends. Looking back, there was a time when people spent more quality moments together with their loved ones and truly cherished every moment."

Utshob is produced by Dope Productions, co-produced by Chorki, and Laughing Elephant Productions as associate producer. By its fifth day of release, the number of screenings for the film had increased. Nearly all of its shows on that day were sold out.

"I would describe *Utshob* as an independent commercial film," he explained, "because I struggled to find producers for it. I'm deeply grateful to my wife Shormila Akter, director and producer Shakeeb Fahad, and, last but not least, Chorki, who believed in me and stood by me throughout the journey."

After the success of *Utshob*, Tanim plans to take a short break, while also hinting at a possible sequel to the film. As for the audience eagerly awaiting *Kaiser 2*, he shared that they might have to wait a little longer. Meanwhile, he may be working on another exciting big-screen project.

'Taandob' releases in over 50 theatres across Canada and the US

The Shakib Khan-starrer *Taandob* has been drawing packed audiences and selling out shows since its release among the six Eid-ul-Azha titles. Premiering internationally on June 13, the film has been screened in over 50 cinemas across Europe, the United States, and Canada, distributed by BiosKope Films.

BiosKope directors Raj Hamid and Rubna Rashid Khan confirmed *Taandob* will screen in 60 theatres during its first week, launching in cities like New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, Rome, and Stockholm. Marking the distribution company's 50th international release, *Taandob* is being backed by a major promotional campaign.

Taandob, directed by Raihan Rafi, centres on a dramatic TV channel attack and stars Afzal Hossain, Jaya Ahsan, Sabila Nur, and others, with cameos by Afran Nisho and Siam Ahmed.

BTS' J-Hope breaks YouTube record with 'Killin' It Girl'

BTS member J-Hope made a powerful comeback last Friday (June 13) with his new single *Killin' It Girl*, featuring Gloc-9.

The music video hit one million views on YouTube in just 43 minutes, setting a 2025 record for the fastest by a Korean artist, surpassing Blackpink member Jennie's solo track *Like Jennie*.

Blending pop and hip-hop, the high-energy track captures the thrill of love at first sight. The video showcases J-Hope's bold new look and a standout dance performance.

The song was released during the week marking BTS' 12th anniversary, just ahead of J-Hope's final *Hope on the Stage* concert in Seoul, where he delivered the track's live debut.





NEWS

South Africa seal a 'special' victory

FROM PAGE 12 Allan Donald, Shaun Pollock, AB de Villiers and Jacques Kallis had failed.

South Africa's path to the final was criticised, with the Proteas playing just 12 Tests in the WTC cycle and none against England or Australia.

Markram, dismissed for a duck in the first innings, was 102 not out and Bavuma unbeaten on 65 despite spending most of his innings limping with a hamstring injury.

But South Africa have such a long history of folding under pressure they could not take anything for granted against serial winners and defending WTC title-holders Australia.

In 18 previous attempts in the one-day international and T20 World Cups, South Africa had only reached a solitary final.

But South Africa, so often labelled "chokers" for their failure to close out knockout games, held their nerve yesterday as a largely unheralded side succeeded where star players such as

match figures of 9-110.

"Unfortunately, it was a bridge too far," said Australia captain Pat Cummins, who led Australia to the 2023 WTC title after New Zealand won the inaugural 2021 final.

South Africa suffered a setback early on Saturday when Bavuma, who had added just one run to his overnight score, was caught behind off Cummins to end a stand of 147 with Markram.

But Markram couldn't quite finish the job, though. His pull off Hazlewood was brilliantly caught by Travis Head at midwicket to end a 207-ball innings featuring 14 fours.

As Markram received a standing ovation on his way back to the pavilion, several Australia players shook his hand.

It was left to Kyle Verreyne to hit the winning run as South Africa completed the second-highest chase to win a Test at Lord's, behind the West Indies' 344-1 against England in 1984.

Pirojpur Sadar Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The bus driver fled the scene, police said.

In Cumilla's Daudkandi upazila, one person died and eight were injured when a passenger bus plunged into a roadside ditch near Shahidnagar Rajarhat on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway around 3:00am.

The deceased was Shilpi Begum, 26, of Machuakhal village in Patuakhali, said Mohammad Rashed Khan Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Daudkandi Highway Police Station.

The bus was heading to Cox's Bazar from Patuakhali when the driver lost control of the steering.

In Habiganj's Madhabpur upazila, a man was killed after being hit by a train in the Teliapara area around 3:30pm.

Sub-inspector Joy Pal of the local police outpost said the man, believed to be about 30, was walking along the rail track while on the phone when a Chattogram-bound Paharika Express train hit him. He died on the spot.

Police recovered the body, but his identity could not be confirmed till the filing of this report around 9:00pm.

"Our correspondents from Chattogram, Thakurgaon, Pirojpur, Cumilla and Moulvibazar contributed to the report."

Law enforcers

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happen—they've been happening over the last 53 years. If everything were perfect, we wouldn't need a police force. The playing field may never be completely even, but we aim to minimise the gaps as much as possible."

Jahangir Alam urged the media to act responsibly ahead of the polls, particularly regarding sensitive information.

"Please do not publish fragmented reports. Whatever you report, make sure it reflects the full context. Incomplete information can be twisted, especially by those outside the country," he cautioned.

He said that the overall law and order situation has significantly improved, citing the incident-free Eid holidays as an example of the police force's effectiveness.

"Just look at this Eid—there hasn't been a single major negative report. By the grace of Allah, everything went smoothly. That proves how much the law and order has improved," he told reporters after visiting the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) headquarters in Dhaka.

Acknowledging the occurrence of theft and mugging, he said no serious crimes were reported during the holiday period.

"Improvement has no limit; it requires constant effort," he said.

He also addressed a mugging incident in Uttara, where over Tk 1 crore was stolen by men in Rab uniform. "Even if they're Rab members, they won't be spared. Many are dressing in police, Rab or Ansar uniforms to commit crimes—we're taking action against them too."

The home adviser further clarified the ongoing debate around lethal weapons.

"These days, even a pencil can be lethal. So yes, APBn personnel carry rifles—that's standard. Their role is different from regular police—in wartime, they may have to fight alongside the army."

The adviser also raised concerns over repeated pushbacks of people across the border from India.

"We've informed India through diplomatic channels, including our foreign ministry and their high commissioner in Dhaka. If any of our citizens are in India, we will take them back—but through proper channels, not by abandoning them in forests or rivers. That is inhumane, and we've issued a strong protest," the adviser added.

Tour organiser arrested

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by only one local guide, Siddhartha Tenchongya, set off towards the Andharmanik trail with 12 participants, while the remaining 21 participants, including Smriti Akhter, were sent back to Alkadam under the supervision of Hasan, reads the complaint.

On the afternoon of June 11, when the team reached the Shamuk Jhorna area, heavy rainfall triggered a flash flood that swept away Smriti, Hasan, and Jubairul.

The complaint adds that the accident occurred due to a lack of understanding of the weather in the hills, inexperienced guides, the absence of proper administrative approvals, and irresponsible planning.

Barsha and other unknown

individuals who organised the event are responsible for the deaths, it adds.

Bandarban Additional Superintendent of Police Zenia Chakma said, "Initial findings suggest the tragedy resulted from mismanagement in the tour operation."

Mintu Karmakar, president of the Bandarban Tourist Guide Association, said, "The incident highlights growing concerns over unregulated, event-based tours in the hills. Strict regulation and legal framework are needed to ensure safety in adventure tourism."

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abdullah Al Momin said, "Permission was granted for just 12 people. But in reality, 33 joined. The tour operators misled the administration with false information."

Man killed for protesting

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girl. Her father strongly protested it, questioning how Jitu could consider marrying an underage girl.

An altercation broke out between Jitu and the girl's father yesterday afternoon. Around 2:00pm, Jitu went to the victim's house with a gang on 4-5 motorcycles, forcibly took the man to the Jorahat area, and severely beat him, said the police official.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team went to the spot and found the man in a critical condition. When the family took him to a hospital, doctors declared him dead, Addl SP Mostafa added.

The victim's family alleged that after they rejected Jitu's marriage proposal, he began harassing the girl. Yesterday morning, the girl's father

became enraged and slapped Jitu.

Later, Jitu and his associates severely beat the man, they said.

When he tried to take shelter at home, Jitu and his accomplices returned on 4-5 motorcycles, forcibly dragged him to the Phulbari riverbank, and beat him to death, alleged the victim's family.

OC Hasan said there are five cases against Jitu with the Sadar Police Station, including charges of drugs and attempted robbery.

Contacted, Bogura Sweekhaseb Dal President Sarkar Mukul said the organisation expelled Jitu following the incident, and it would not take responsibility for an individual's crime.

However, no case was filed till the filing of this report at 10:00pm.

Israel kills 23

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were stopped on the edge of Cairo as they attempted to reach the Suez Canal city of Ismailiya, the organisers said.

From there they had hoped to travel on by road to the North Sinai city of El-Arish, the starting point for their planned march to the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing on the

Gaza border.

Most of the activists were ordered onto buses back to the capital after several hours of questioning, but some remained in custody, the organisers said.

At least one activist was expelled from Egypt, several sources said, adding to dozens more denied entry or expelled in the run-up.