

# Films should provoke thought, not propaganda: IMTIAZ BARSHON



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

## RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Imtiaz Barshon has his hands full. His long delayed web film *Omimangshito*, which had been stuck at the censor board for years, was finally released on December 15, while his upcoming film *Ekhane Rajnoitik Alap Joruri* is set to hit screens on December 26. Though the two films deal with different subjects, they share a common thread. Both urge the audience to think.

Speaking about the release of *Omimangshito*, Barshon said, "For a long time, it was hidden behind the scenes. At one point, I thought the film might never be released. But once it finally passed censorship, I started holding on to hope that it would be released someday, one way or another. And finally, it has been released this December, the month of Victory. That truly makes me very happy."

According to Barshon, *Omimangshito* offers more than just a story. It serves as food for thought. According to Barshon, "In Bangladesh, many cases remain unsolved for various reasons, sometimes due to political pressure, sometimes because of negligence in investigation, and at other times due to the absence of concrete clues despite sincere efforts. If a film like this can create even a small impact, provoke discussion, or prompt some response from the authorities regarding such unresolved or mysterious cases, then it will have achieved something meaningful. Barshon believes that in such a case, the pain and effort behind the film would feel worthwhile.

Talking about *Ekhane Rajnoitik Alap Joruri*, Barshon said the title itself initially drew him in. When he read the script, he discovered a narrative that brings together a wide range of political issues, tracing them back to even before the birth of Bangladesh. These are conversations we rarely see in cinema. While such debates may surface in private gatherings or informal discussions, they are

almost never portrayed on screen, particularly in Bangladeshi films.

For Barshon, this is particularly significant for the younger generation. There was a time when many young people believed engaging with politics was unintelligent or uncool. Yet it was these very individuals who stepped forward during the 2024 movement and turned it into a success. He believes this generation needs a deeper understanding of history and political discourse. From that perspective, *Ekhane Rajnoitik Alap Joruri* stands as meaningful content for all, offering not just entertainment, but genuine food for thought.

When asked about working on politically themed films and how he remains cautious, Barshon said, "For me, the key question is whether the content is politically correct. Whether what the screenwriter or filmmaker wants to say is truthful and responsible. If it is politically correct, I feel comfortable working on it. But if I feel that what is being said is not entirely true, then I might choose not to do the work."

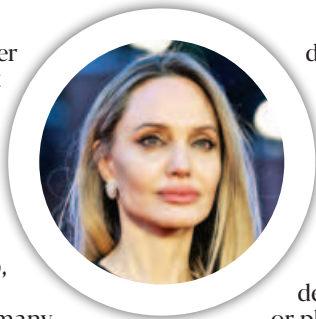
Films dealing with political or cultural issues often risk turning into propaganda or becoming overwhelmed by slogans. Asked how filmmakers and actors can avoid this pitfall,

Barshon emphasised the conscious effort behind *Ekhane Rajnoitik Alap Joruri* to remain grounded in truth.

Reflecting on the challenges artistes face amid growing political tension, Barshon said, "Politics is not something outside of you, me, or any of us. None of us are outside politics. Often, people in the creative world may not be indifferent, but they are not always vocal. They do not speak on every political issue. But when a country enters a period of crisis, when silence is no longer an option, when the government or administration becomes authoritarian and turns against the people, then standing on the side of justice becomes a responsibility for every artist, regardless of whether it brings threats or not."



# ANGELINA JOLIE reveals mastectomy scars on Time France debut cover



Angelina Jolie has revealed her mastectomy scars for the first time on the debut cover of Time France, marking a rare and deliberate act of public visibility. Photographed by Nathaniel Goldberg, the image shows the actor facing the camera in a low-cut top, her scars clearly visible.

"I share these scars with many women I love. And I'm always moved when I see other women share theirs," Jolie told the magazine. She previously

disclosed undergoing a preventive double mastectomy in 2013 after learning of a genetic cancer risk. Reaffirming her advocacy, Jolie stressed that access to cancer screening and healthcare should not depend on financial means or place of residence. She is also awaiting the release of *Coutures*, scheduled for French cinemas in February 2026.

# NEWS

## Fizz bags record IPL payday

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for Sunrisers Hyderabad, Mumbai Indians, Rajasthan Royals, and the Chennai and Delhi franchises between 2016 and 2025.

With this price, Mustafizur also broke his own record. Last year, he was picked by Delhi for INR six crore as a replacement player.

He began his IPL journey in 2016 with Hyderabad, bought for INR 1.4 crore. He made an immediate impact, taking 17 wickets in 16 matches and playing a crucial role in Hyderabad's maiden IPL title. In the same year, he was adjudged the Emerging Player of the Tournament and remains the only foreign player to achieve this feat.

Mustafizur played only one match for Hyderabad the following season. In 2018, Mumbai Indians picked him for INR 2.20 crore. After taking seven wickets in seven matches, he was released and went unpicked in the 2020 auction.

He made a comeback in 2021 when Rajasthan bought him for INR one crore, claiming 14 wickets in 14 matches. He then represented Delhi for two seasons at INR two crore before moving to Chennai, where he took 14 wickets in nine matches under Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

Last year, he joined Delhi as a replacement player in the final phase of the IPL and took four wickets in three matches.

So far, Mustafizur has played 60 IPL matches and taken 65 wickets. In T20s, he has played 126 matches for Bangladesh, picking up 158 wickets.

Alongside Mustafizur, Kolkata also acquired Sri Lankan pacer Matheesha Pathirana (INR 18 crore) and Australian all-rounder Cameron Green (INR 25.20 crore) from the mini-auction.

Another Bangladeshi pacer, Taskin Ahmed, with a base price of INR 75 lakh, went unsold. Five more Bangladeshi players -- leg-spinner Rishad Hossain, left-arm pacer Shoriful Islam, left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan, and right-arm pacers Nahid Rana and Tanzim Hasan Sakib -- were listed but received no bids.

## Prime suspect hired car day before attack

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Moncho wrote that the Dhaka-8 independent aspirant's condition had slightly deteriorated after preliminary tests. "But it has since stabilised," adding that another surgery is required, but his condition is not yet fit for it.

Nuruzzaman, hailing from Faridpur, runs a rent-a-car business and got acquainted with Faisal nine months ago, a DB officer involved in the investigation told this newspaper.

"Faisal has known Nuruzzaman for the last nine months and would occasionally hire cars through him to travel to Shaturia, where he has a female acquaintance.

"On the day of the incident, Faisal hired a car with the plan to travel from Matsya Bhaban around 11:00am. Accordingly, Nuruzzaman sent a car. However, when Faisal did not show up even by 1:00pm, the driver, Sumon, contacted Nuruzzaman."

The officer, preferring anonymity, added, "When Nuruzzaman contacted Faisal, he said he would board the car from Agargaon. Shortly afterwards, he again changed the pickup point, saying he would get in from Aminbazar.

"When the driver reached Aminbazar around 4:00pm and contacted Faisal again, he then said he would board the car from Kalampur. Faisal and his associate then went from there to Mawna. He

then told the driver to take them to Haluaghat."

The driver initially refused, but after Nuruzzaman's request, he later agreed for a fare of Tk 10,000, the officer added.

Meanwhile, the Rapid Action Battalion yesterday detained Faisal's father, Humayun Kabir, in connection with Hadi's shooting. Taposh Karmaker, media officer of Rab-10, confirmed to The Daily Star. "The process of handing him over to DB is ongoing."

According to investigators, Humayun helped Faisal flee the capital after the shooting and allegedly replaced the registration number of the motorcycle used in the attack.

"Faisal had removed the original number plate before the shooting and attached another to conceal the bike owner's identity," said a DB officer.

After the shooting, Faisal and Alamgir went to Cornell Goli in Agargaon, where Faisal's parents live. He allegedly asked Humayun to reinstall the original number plate. The officer added that investigators later confirmed the change through CCTV analysis.

Also yesterday, a Dhaka court yesterday placed Mohammad Kabir, a close associate of Faisal, who was arrested early Monday, on a seven-day remand in connection with the case filed over Hadi's shooting.

Earlier, Faisal's wife Saheda Parvin Samia, brother-in-law Wahid Ahmed Shipu, and friend Maria Akter Lima were put on a five-day remand each in the case, which was initially filed with Paltan Police Station and later handed over to DB.

Wing Commander MZM In the khab Chowdhury, director of Rab's law and media wing, late last night claimed weapons and ammunition used in the shooting were recovered from a waterbody in Narsingdi's Taruar Beel, adding that another man named Faisal was detained during the operation. "Two pistols, a pistol-like object, two magazines and 41 rounds of ammunition were recovered," he told this reporter.

The official did not elaborate further.

Speaking to The Daily Star earlier, Md Shamsul Islam, operations officer of Rab-2, said they conducted a raid at the residence of Faisal's sister early Tuesday and recovered two magazines and 11 rounds of ammunition. "Unless we recover the weapon used in the shooting, we cannot be sure if these [materials recovered] were used in the incident or not."

Contacted, Nasirul Islam, joint commissioner of DB (South), said several arrestees are currently on remand and are being interrogated, while others suspected of being involved in the incident are also being questioned.

## Govt backtracking on surveillance reforms?

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The original proposals aimed for a multi-agency structure to oversee the central interception platform, involving one representative nominated by the president, one by the prime minister and one by the speaker of parliament, along with a retired judge from the High Court Division and a retired district and sessions judge.

When selecting the representatives, priority would be given to individuals with expertise in technology, national security, protection matters and law. That arrangement was intended to prevent unilateral control over a highly intrusive capability.

Under the revised version, the authority is largely concentrated within the home ministry.

The ministry will create a three-member council for overseeing

interception and determine the platform's structure, staffing and operational rules.

Under this structure, the home secretary will serve as chair, with the other two members being the secretary of the legislative and parliamentary affairs division and the principal staff officer of the Armed Forces Division.

The new draft has also removed provisions mandating transparency.

The original draft required the publication of annual reports containing statistics on interception requests, approvals and rejections.

Such disclosures were seen as a way to inform parliament and the public about the scale of surveillance without compromising investigations.

The revised ordinance removes the obligation for public reporting, retaining only a general reference to

reporting to parliament.

A letter, signed by Telecom Secretary Abdun Naser Khan and dated December 9, said, "As per the directions of the Advisory Council meeting, the draft ordinance has been reviewed in detail in the inter-ministerial meeting in coordination with the concerned ministries/departments including the Ministry of Home Affairs, Finance Department and others, and the relevant sections have been revised."

The letter further said the revised draft would be placed before the cabinet. Subsequently, the draft was placed before the cabinet on Thursday but was returned unapproved.

Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, could not be reached for comment despite repeated calls and messages.

## A renewed pledge

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Force performed a national flag-bearing skydive at the National Parade Ground in Dhaka.

However, like last year, the traditional parade centring day was not held this year.

In his address to the nation from the parade ground, Prof Yunus called for united efforts to build a safe, happy, and prosperous Bangladesh for the new generation.

"Let us all join hands and move forward on the path of peace, prosperity and democracy. Let us move forward together on the path of justice, democracy, humanity, and development."

On the occasion, Indian Minister for External Affairs S Jaishankar greeted the people of Bangladesh.

"Greetings to Foreign Affairs Adviser Mohammad Touhid Hossain, the Interim Government and the people of Bangladesh on Bijoy Dibosh," he posted on his X handle.

The national flag was hoisted at all government, semi-government, autonomous and private buildings, as well as at Bangladesh embassies and missions abroad, while important buildings and establishments in the capital and major cities and district headquarters were illuminated with decorative lights.

Major roads in Dhaka and various cities were decorated with banners, festoons and the national flag.

The government undertook various programmes, including a three-day victory fair, a band show, cultural events, and recitation, essay writing and painting competitions on the Liberation War for children.

However, this year was not marked by much fanfare.

Patriotic songs were scarcely heard in public places, on roads, or in alleys. The selling of national flags, once a common sight across the cities, was also largely absent.

In the afternoon, the president felicitated family members of Bir Shresthas at Bangabhaban.

Receptions were also held for freedom fighters and their family members across cities, districts and upazilas.

Marking the day, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting published special supplements. State-owned Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar, and other TV channels and radio stations broadcast programmes highlighting the glorious history of the Liberation War.

Cinema halls across the country screened films on Liberation War free of charge for students, while documentaries based on the war were



## Rahul Ananda to headline 'Great Victory Day Cultural Programme' in Lisbon

To celebrate the Victory Day, a *Great Victory Day Celebration and Cultural Programme* will be held on December 28 with the participation of expatriate Bangladeshis living in Portugal. The main attraction of the event will be Rahul Ananda, the frontman of folk-fusion band Joler Gaan.

Organised by Casa Do Bangladesh at the Mercado da Culturas Hall premises in Lisbon, this cultural programme will also feature performances by popular artistes Nadim Wahed, famed for *Sona Pakhi*, and Srabony Mutsuddy.

Roni Hossain, the organisation's president, said that the event aims to present the spirit of the Great Liberation War and Bangladesh's history, culture, and heritage to the new generation in the diaspora.

### WHAT'S THE HAPS?

## 'Pawmum Parbon 2025'

For the first time, Mro children from Lama bring their art, music, and traditions to the capital. Emerging from a bamboo classroom in the hills, these young storytellers present the colours, sounds, and inherited wisdom of their community—an intimate, powerful encounter with Indigenous culture beyond the margins.

**Date:** Wednesday-Wednesday | December 17-24, 2025

**Time:** 3pm -9pm

**Venue:** La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka

