

# GORE, GRIT, HORROR: Vicky Zahed unpacks the philosophy behind 'Chokro 2'

SHARMIN JOYA

"How was a family of nine convinced to take their own lives together, in unison, without any of them attempting to escape?" — This haunting question consumed Vicky Zahed after he learned about the real life tragedy of the Adam family that unfolded in 2007 in Mymensingh.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Drawing from these disturbing events and weaving them with his own imagination, Vicky candidly opens up about his latest release,

*Chokro 2*, which emerged as one of the standout highlights on OTT platforms this Eid-ul-Fitr.

**How much of the rituals shown in 'Chokro' about the mysterious 'Adam Family' are based on real events?**

Many of the rituals depicted in the 'Adam Family' case were based on research from real scriptures and historical references. I prefer to keep the sources anonymous; information on how such practices may have worked was collected and then combined with fictional elements to build the story.

**There seems to be a significant shift in tone between Season 1 and Season 2. Was this a conscious creative decision?**

It was intentional. Season 1 was designed to be more subtle and scientific, focusing on the 'Adam' belief system and exploring ideas like brain manipulation, shared hallucination, and neuroscience.

Season 2, on the other hand, moves in a more commercial and dramatic direction. There was pressure from OTT platforms to deliver a strong hit after a gap in successful content, which influenced the shift in tone to

more commercial, which actually worked!

As a result, Season 2 leans more into fiction and mythology, with a bolder, more 'loud' storytelling style. While my personal preference remains the quieter, more restrained approach of Season 1.

**'Chokro' can be said to be a landmark in the psychological thriller genre in Bangladeshi content. What was your specific vision for achieving this status?**

I aimed to create something that this generation would remember as a landmark in psychological thrillers and cult storytelling. I wanted to move away from typical ghost stories and build a more layered, unsettling experience.

Even though it isn't traditional horror, the fact that audiences still feel genuinely disturbed or afraid shows that the impact has come through as intended.

**You seem to have a specific pattern with different OTT platforms when it comes to the genres and stories you explore. How do you decide which platform is the right fit for your craziest ideas?**

While there is no formal arrangement with any platform, a clear pattern has emerged in terms of their willingness to take risks. I have found that iScreen and Channel i are the platforms most open to my more unconventional and out-of-the-box ideas. Whenever I present a truly unusual or horror driven concept—like *Punorjonno* or *Chokro*—they have backed me, and those projects have consistently found success there. On the other hand, platforms such as Chorki and Hoichoi generally tend to prefer more grounded, realistic narratives.

**There are speculations that you're going to make a silver screen debut with 'Pulsirat', featuring Afran Nisho and Mehazabien Chowdhury?**

I have signed a contract with Alpha-i, and I will be making the film soon; however, no cast members have been officially signed as of yet! But yes, I do wish to work on my first feature film with this duo. For now, I want to keep all the attention fully focused on the immense success of *Chokro*.



## ROZINA

### returns to direction with 'Ekhoni Shomoy'

Veteran actor Rozina is set to return to direction with her second film, *Ekhoni Shomoy*, three years after her debut directorial *Phire Dekha* (2023). She is currently working on planning and budgeting, with hopes to begin shooting within the year.

Written by filmmaker Chatku Ahmed, the film will explore contemporary life, focusing on themes of love, relationships, and social realities, while also carrying a strong anti-dowry message. Rozina said the project remains in its early stages, with the cast yet to be finalised.

A prominent figure in Bangladeshi cinema for over four decades, Rozina rose to fame with *Rajmahal* (1978) and later won National Film Awards for films such as *Koshai*, *Jibondhara*, and *Dinkal*.

### WHAT'S THE HAPS?



## 'All Quiet on the Western Front'

Adapted from *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque, this searing production traces youth undone by war's brutal machinery. Director Bakar Bakul renders the battlefield with stark immediacy, dismantling romantic illusions and exposing the fragile, human core beneath uniforms and slogans.

**Date:** Thursday-Friday | April 23-24, 2026  
**Time:** 7 pm onwards  
**Venue:** National Theatre Hall, BSA

## A K Rahul shares stage with Memphis May Fire in Thailand



Bangladeshi musician A K Rahul and his band have marked a major milestone by sharing the stage with internationally acclaimed metalcore band Memphis May Fire at a live show in Bangkok, Thailand.

Performing as the opening act for a band he has followed since 2012, Rahul described the experience as "surreal" and a long-held dream fulfilled. He expressed gratitude to fans and supporters who helped make the opportunity possible.

The band also received an enthusiastic response from the Thai audience, which Rahul said was overwhelming.

Calling the performance a significant step in their journey, he hinted at upcoming tour content, including videos and vlogs, to share more moments with fans.

# NEWS

## A window for fund recovery

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the government's steps to recover laundered money and projected recovery this fiscal year.

In response, Khosru said the Bank Resolution Act, 2026, has created fresh opportunities for all stakeholders, including shareholders and investors. The changes had "opened a window", he said, stressing that the objective was not to facilitate the return of any specific individual but to ensure funds were deposited back into the banking system.

Khosru said the most important step in recovering assets illegally transferred abroad is to send a Mutual Legal Assistance Request (MLAR) to the relevant countries under the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act, 2012.

A joint investigation team comprising officials from the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Criminal Investigation Department, the Central Intelligence Cell, customs and intelligence has filed cases in Bangladeshi courts over alleged money laundering by the S Alam Group and the Beximco Group.

MLARs have been sent to four countries — British Virgin Islands, Cyprus, Jersey and Singapore — for S Alam Group, and to the UK and the UAE for Beximco Group.

Civil and criminal proceedings are both being pursued, along with asset tracing through four international law firms.

However, recovery is a complex and lengthy legal process, and it is not yet possible to estimate how much money can be recovered within the current or next fiscal year, Khosru said.

In a separate reply, he said the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) had frozen Tk 243.60 crore across 662 bank accounts and Tk 813.56 crore across 227 beneficiary owner's (BO) accounts linked to individuals associated with S Alam Group.

Later, intelligence reports were sent from the BFIU to the law enforcement agencies for further investigation regarding the transactions of the S Alam Group.

In this context, the government formed a joint investigation team

regarding the money laundering case of the S Alam Group.

A total of 27 cases have been filed against S Alam Group in the courts of Bangladesh by the said investigation team, out of which charge sheets were submitted in three cases.

Based on the information received by the Joint Search and Investigation Team, the court has seized fixed assets (land, flats, houses) worth Tk 4,264 crore of S Alam Group in Bangladesh and shares worth Tk 6,692.34 crore of 2,680 bank accounts and Tk 24,810.88 crore of 171 companies.

In addition, the Bangladesh court has issued a judgement to seize one house, 62 bank accounts and assets of 14 companies and six trust funds worth Tk 3,222.70 crore abroad.

In this manner, the banks affected by the illegal laundering of S Alam Group's defaulted loan money abroad have signed a non-disclosure agreement and started the process of appointing four international law firms on 'No Recovery, No Fee' terms to recover their loan money.

## 'Consensus commission was undemocratic'

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Sara also pointed out that there was not a single female member in the Consensus Commission, formed during the interim government. Similarly, no female lawyers or judges were included in the Judicial Reform Commission.

She further commented that the public had no clear understanding of the third question in the referendum.

Addressing the participants, she asked, "Raise your hands and tell me how many of you can say what the 30 proposals were? ... I don't think you even know what you voted for."

"This is a big question. You are voting, but for what?... Yes or no, we know that. But if I don't know what I'm voting for, then how much value does that vote really have?"

She also spoke about the Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance and the Supreme Court Judges Appointment Ordinance, expressing the view that these two laws from the interim period should be reinstated.

"We don't want to go back to a situation where those in the executive use the judiciary as a tool to suppress their political opponents. This basic change is what we seek, and these two laws were necessary to achieve it so

that those seeking justice, regardless of their political identity, can receive justice.

Sara said, "... These laws are definitely needed again. Any minor improvements that can be made are still possible, and this is something that should be discussed now."

"As the judiciary does not have full control, especially financial control, it has to go through a long process. They should be freed from that process," she said, adding, "Having a secretariat is absolutely essential; this has been an aspiration for us for more than 50 years."

Referring to the forced exile of former chief justice SK Sinha during the Awami League government, Sara said that despite so many years passing, civil society has not raised demands for accountability or resolution. "Let it be resolved. Let us find out who was involved."

She added that even after the July uprising, Appellate Division judges of the Supreme Court had to resign in the face of student protests. Under pressure from their demands, several judges were abruptly removed, some of whom were quite competent.

She also alleged that former chief justice ABM Khairul Haque, who

delivered the verdict in the fifteenth amendment case regarding the caretaker government system, has been "falsely" implicated in the July killing case.

"So many months have passed, and there is still no charge sheet, yet it is being said that Justice Khairul Haque stood there and fired shots or ordered shootings."

"We are not speaking up about this. Civil society, Shujan, the Bangladesh Bar Council, or bar associations. No one is speaking; we are all silent."

At the discussion, Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury also criticised the government for repealing two ordinances.

He said, "These are undoubtedly regressive steps. These are ominous signs. These are red flags. This will not bode well for the nation. You know, the law minister has assured the nation that at a subsequent stage they will come up with new drafts of improved laws in this regard. But in our country, it is very risky and unwise to take the words of a politician and face them."

Among others, lawyers Tanim Hussain Shawon, Imran Abdullah Siddiq, and Fahim Mashroor, co-coordinator of Nagarik Coalition, spoke on the occasion.

## An unsettling reality

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— 70 percent of whom were engaged in agricultural work.

The scale of lightning-related deaths in Bangladesh is staggering compared to other countries, according to a study presented at the American Geophysical Union's Fall Meeting in December 2024 by researchers Mostofa Kamal, Yanping Li, Fateme Piya, and Joyanal Shishir.

The study found that Bangladesh experiences seven times fewer lightning strikes than the United States, yet its fatalities are 10 times higher.

Between 2010 and 2023, around 4,000 people were killed by lightning, with 75 percent of them in rural areas, the study showed.

**SCIENCE OF LIGHTNING**  
Another study published in Earth Systems and Environment in April 2025 by ATMS Azam, Nasreen Akter, Ashraf Dewan, Mohammad Al-Masum Molla, and M Rafiuddin found a key reason behind increased lightning activity.

According to the study, lightning strikes are most frequent during the pre-monsoon season (April-May) due to an elevated concentration of dust and sulphate particles in the air.

The study calls it "transboundary air pollution", as these pollutants are transported into Bangladesh from northern and western India via upper-level westerlies. Meanwhile, Dhaka, one of the country's most polluted cities, has also contributed to the situation.

Meteorologists explain that lightning is caused by the rapid buildup and discharge of electrical energy resulting from collisions between ice crystals and soft hails within a storm cloud. Higher concentrations of dust and sulphate particles increase cloud electrification and charge separation.

**GOVT RESPONSES**  
In 2016, after 80 people were killed in a single day, Bangladesh declared lightning a natural disaster.

Since then, successive governments have implemented projects like palm tree plantations, installation of lightning arresters, and constructing shelters.

However, none of those were successful in reducing lightning-related deaths.

Md Abdus Sobhan, deputy director (planning) at the Department of Disaster Management, said 306 lightning arresters were installed in fiscal 2021-22 under a completed project.

"After that, we formulated another project to build farmer shelters with

lightning arresters in lightning-prone areas. But this project is still under review at the Planning Commission."

Meanwhile, Netai Chandra Dey Sarker, director of monitoring and information management at the department, said the Disaster Management and Relief Ministry's 1090 disaster hotline cannot keep pace with lightning.

"After receiving a lightning forecast, the time is so short that this method is not effective. We are now exploring instant voice messages pushed to mobile networks in at-risk areas, but the plan remains at an early stage."

Meanwhile, Rashim Mollah, general secretary of SSTAF, said the government often provides some financial compensation to the families of the deceased. "But the injured suffer the most, with no support to cover the medical costs."

### A GAP THAT KILLS

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) has for years been able to forecast thunderstorms and possible lightning strikes.

However, the gap between what forecasters produce and what reaches farmers in the field has emerged as a central failure.

BMD Senior Meteorologist Muhammad Abul Kalam Mallik said, "Thunderstorms are short-term phenomena.... They can develop within 30 minutes to 1.5 hours. Currently, we are publishing forecasts only through the department's official Facebook page, which is not reaching the farmers in the field."

He said the most dangerous moments are when workers ignore or fail to understand the warning signs overhead.

"Farmers or labourers in the field, or fishermen in the water, usually hear thunder as a signal, which comes after lightning. They don't look up at the sky," he said, adding that awareness is the key to saving lives.

"Through several NGOs and Met clubs at schools, we are trying to raise awareness with a single slogan — 'when thunder roars, go indoors.'"

Mallik explained the 30-30 rule, urging all to follow it. "First, if lightning flashes in the sky and you hear thunder within 30 seconds, then the thunderstorm is coming towards you. You should go home and wait 30 minutes after the last thunder."

Netai Chandra also said that before anything else, public awareness needs to be raised. "For lightning, we have formulated a standard operating

protocol and, to build awareness, a committee has been formed, which is also working on all possible ways to disseminate forecast messages to the masses."

However, SSTAF GS Rashim Mollah said awareness alone cannot overcome the economic pressure pushing farmers to stay in the field.

"When farmers see clouds in the sky, they rush to harvest. Besides, in rural farming areas, houses or shelters are too far from the fields, so they often choose to continue working."

He said shelters are the answer, not technology. "Hundreds of crores of taka were spent on government projects that never really worked.... Since incidents occur more in the Haor region, if a pucca house can be constructed every 100 metres as a shelter, that will be enough. It will help save lives even without the use of arresters."

Mollah also urged free medical care for survivors and the inclusion of lightning safety in school textbooks.

## Citizens decry

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mark Mujibnagar Day. "Even no minister or senior government official was present, which amounts to neglect the history of Liberation War."

At the briefing, Ruhin Hossain Prince, former general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), said, "From cities to rural areas, Liberation War memorials have been vandalised. Those behind the attacks don't believe in the spirit of the Liberation War. I think such incidents cannot occur without government patronage. Not a single case has been filed over the incidents during the interim government's tenure."

The delegation placed several demands before the government, including immediate reconstruction of damaged Liberation War memorials across the country, identification and prosecution of those responsible for the attacks, proper state observance of Mujibnagar Day, and speedy completion of the under construction Liberation War Museum at Mujibnagar.

Others who spoke at the event included Shamsul Huda, executive director of Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD); Rajekuzzaman Ratan, assistant general secretary of Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (Basad); and Zakir Hossain, chief executive of Nagarik Uddyog.