

## REVIEW

MICHAEL  
captures the  
magic, but  
hesitates to  
confront the man

SHABABA IQBAL

For as long as I can remember, Michael Jackson has been part of my life — a love that took root before I was old enough to understand why. I would scream at the sight of him on our television screen, blow kisses at the set, and watch in awe as he danced. No one moved like him: effortless yet electric, smooth as butter. That feeling never left me. To this day, I find myself disappearing down rabbit holes of his interviews and music videos, marvelling all over again — and cornering anyone within earshot with facts about him they almost certainly did not ask for. So yes, I came to *Michael* as a devoted fan — and for the most part, it gave me plenty to hold onto.

At the heart of the film is Jaafar Jackson. To say he embodies his legendary uncle would be an understatement. He doesn't merely play Michael Jackson — he channels him, and watching him, I found myself forgetting, more than once, that I wasn't watching the man himself. The mercurial grace, the quiet intensity, the almost otherworldly charisma that made the King of Pop impossible to look away

from — it is all there. It is a portrayal that will be talked about for years.

Alongside him, Juliano Valdi is a genuine find. As the young Michael, he captures something rare and nearly impossible to manufacture — the flicker of an extraordinary talent before it fully knows what it is. For all its dazzle and



spectacle, the film never lets you forget that beneath it all was a boy who grew up too fast, in circumstances that would have broken most — and who channelled all of it, somehow, into something the world had never seen before.

The screenplay centres on the fraught

relationship between Michael and his father — Joe Jackson, played with coiled, watchful menace by Colman Domingo — while tracing the rise of a solo career that would redefine popular music. The film finds flashes of tenderness, among them Michael's well-documented love for animals — a detail I have always found deeply touching, rendered here not as eccentricity but as the logical retreat of a man for whom fame had made ordinary human warmth nearly inaccessible. These moments reveal what the film is capable of when it trusts its subject.

The trouble is that it too rarely does. As an estate-approved production that underwent costly reshoots under legal constraint, *Michael* was perhaps never positioned to fully interrogate the man it celebrates — and that limitation is palpable in almost every scene. The film moves briskly from milestone to milestone, skimming the surface of a rich mythology rather than truly excavating it. A scene in which Joe beats Michael in front of his siblings should be shattering; instead it functions mostly as exposition — something to be gotten

through en route to the fun stuff. There is no curiosity about why the Jackson 5 connected with audiences, or what a prepubescent boy singing love songs to adoring crowds said about the world that made him famous. More telling still, it hardly pauses to explore the true cost of such singular greatness: the demons that fuelled the genius, or what it felt like to be that person, in that body, under that kind of unrelenting scrutiny. The result feels closer to a lavish greatest hits package than a genuine character study.

Ultimately, the admiration at its core is unmistakable — and that is what saves it. For all that it leaves unexplored, *Michael* is never less than watchable, never less than exhilarating. It gave me what I came for — the music, the moves, the man — and in those moments, my heart was full, even if the more complicated truths remained just out of reach. It closes with three words that feel like both a relief and a challenge: his story continues. Michael Jackson's life was simply too vast, contradictory, and extraordinary to fit inside one film — and this one, for all its flaws, at least has the good sense to know it.

Two Bangladeshi films  
to screen at Delhi Int'l  
Film Festival

Two films produced by Impress Telefilm are set to be screened at the upcoming Delhi International Film Festival in India's capital. The films are *Manusher Bagan*, directed by Nurul Alam Atique, and *Neelpodmo*, directed by Towfique Elahi.

At the festival, *Manusher Bagan* will be screened on May 5 at 11:53am local time, while *Neelpodmo* will be shown on May 6 at 6:15pm local time.

*Manusher Bagan* is built around the lives of people from different sections of society. The film stars Prosun Azad, Manoj Kumar, Jyotika Jyoti, Swagata, Munira Mithu, Mahmud Alam, Dipanwita Martin and Orchita Sporschia, among others. The film is also set for a theatrical release in Bangladesh soon.

## WHAT'S THE HAPS?



## 'Mon Boshe Na Shohore'

Kureghor, fronted by Tashrif Khan, brings a textured sonic journey where folk roots meet contemporary resonance. The performance moves through urban longing and quiet rebellion, crafting an intimate soundscape that mirrors the city's unease while offering moments of lyrical stillness and emotional release for listeners.

Date: Thursday | April 30, 2026  
Time: 7:30 pm-9 pm  
Venue: Jatra Biroti

## NEWS

Muggers in disguise killed the customs  
official, says Rab

FROM PAGE 16

Karwan Bazar, Wing Commander MZM Entekhab Chowdhury, director of Rab's Legal and Media Wing, said all five arrestees — Md Sohag, Ismail Hossain Jony, Imran Hossain Hridoy, Rahat Hossain Jewel and Sujon — are active members of an organised mugging gang.

They were arrested in separate drives in Cumilla.

Four of the arrestees gave confessional statements before a Cumilla court yesterday, while another accused was placed on a three-day remand, said Investigation Officer Titu Kumar Nath of Cumilla Sadar South Police Station.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Abida Sultana Moli recorded the statements of four accused — Hridoy, Sohag, Sujon and Jewel — and granted a three-day remand for Jony.

Rab said Bullet was returning to Cumilla from Chattogram after a training programme.

At around 8:45am on April 25, Moynamati Highway Police recovered his body beside a hotel in the Kotbari area on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Multiple injury marks were found on the body.

Rab said it launched an investigation immediately after the body was recovered and intensified surveillance, leading to the arrests.

During preliminary interrogation, the suspects said they belonged to an

organised gang that mainly targeted long distance passengers. They would lure travellers into CNG run auto-rickshaws and later rob them at knifepoint.

Rab also said the vehicle used in the killing belonged to the gang, and the driver, along with three others inside, were habitual criminals.

The Rab official said Bullet, who was travelling by bus, did not get off at his scheduled stoppage at Paduar Bazar on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Instead, he travelled about 5.8 kilometres further to Jhagurjhuli. Investigators believe he may have fallen asleep on the bus.

He fell victim to the gang when he took a CNG-run auto-rickshaw to return from Jhagurjhuli towards Paduar Bazar, also known as Jangalia Bus Stand.

During the drives, Rab recovered and seized weapons and vehicles allegedly used in the crime, including a CNG-run auto-rickshaw, a machete, a hammer and other items.

Rab also said the suspects have multiple cases filed against them at different police stations on various charges, including theft, robbery and drug-related offences.

Bullet Bairagi served as an assistant revenue officer at the Customs, Excise and VAT Commissionerate in Cumilla's Bibir Bazar Land Port.

The day his body was recovered, his mother Nilima Bairagi filed a murder

case with Cumilla Sadar South Model Police Station against unidentified individuals.

Yesterday marked the first birthday of Bullet's only son, Ayyay Bairagi. The day, however, was overshadowed by grief following the killing.

On Sunday morning, after legal formalities, the body was taken to his village home in Tungipara, Gopalganj, where he was buried following funeral rites.

Before that, colleagues paid their last respects at his workplace. The atmosphere at the customs office was heavy with grief as coworkers bid farewell with flowers.

Bullet's mother alleged that it was a planned murder and demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible.

Cumilla Customs, Excise and VAT Commissioner Abdul Mannan Sardar said Bullet had joined the 44th basic training programme in Chattogram on April 11.

After completing the training, he left for Cumilla by bus from Alankar intersection at around 11:00pm on April 24.

He remained in regular contact with his family during the journey. His last call came at 2:25am, when he informed them that he had reached the Tomsom Bridge intersection in Cumilla city.

## Murder suspect 'searched AI on body disposal'

FROM PAGE 1

Prosecutors said in their filing that allegedly followed up with, "How would they find out."

According to the filing, a roommate told investigators he saw Abugharbieh moving cardboard boxes to a compactor dumpster at their apartment complex on April 17.

A subsequent search of the dumpster recovered items belonging to Limon, including his student ID and credit cards, the filing stated.

DNA found on a grey T-shirt was likely Limon's, while genetic material on a kitchen mat matched Bristy, prosecutors said.

Sheriff's investigators later found Limon's remains in a heavy-duty trash bag. An autopsy indicated he died from "multiple sharp force injuries".

Members of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office marine and dive teams [searched] the area around the Howard Frankland Bridge in Tampa, Florida, on Friday.

Human remains were found Sunday (local time) during the search for Bristy, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office said, but the remains have not been identified, NBC News reported.

## SCBA bars AL lawyers from May polls

FROM PAGE 16

leadership to hold the meeting to decide on barring pro-AL lawyers from contesting the election, as the party's activities are banned.

Accordingly, the meeting was held, and the decision was made based on the opinions of general members, he said.

Lawyers who were supporters of Sammilita Ainjibi Samannay Parishad or Bangabandhu Awami Ainjibi Parishad, backed by the AL, and who held positions in those bodies, will not be permitted to run in the SCBA polls under the decision, he said.

Mahfuzur added that the decision will be communicated to the SCBA election commission, led by former High Court Justice Miftah Uddin Choudhury, to take necessary measures.

He said the bar election will be free and fair. Lawyers backed by BNP, Jamaat, and other political parties can participate. More than 8,000 lawyers are registered as voters.

The two-day polls will be held to elect leaders to 14 executive posts of

the SCBA, including president and secretary, for the next year, as per a previous decision of its incumbent executive body.

The last SCBA election was held in March 2024 and was highly controversial. Pro-BNP lawyers won four key posts, including that of president, while AL-backed candidates secured 10 other posts, including that of secretary.

Vote counting was halted for a day following an altercation, allegedly triggered by interference from a group of outsiders on behalf of a candidate. The outsiders attacked some lawyers present at the polling centre in the SCBA auditorium, where the votes were scheduled to be counted.

Talking to this correspondent, lawyer Shah Monjurul Hoque, member of Bangabandhu Awami Ainjibi Parishad, who was elected secretary of the SCBA in that election, said that preventing pro-Liberation lawyers from taking part in the polls is an illegal, arbitrary, and undemocratic decision.

"During the 15 years of Awami League

rule, there were no major disturbances in the Supreme Court Bar Association elections. Some irregularities occurred only in the final year due to the actions of lawyers Ruhul Quddus Kazal and Nahid Sultana Juthi. Excluding the pro-Liberation forces from the election is condemnable."

Following the toppling of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5, 2024, pro-AL lawyer leaders stopped attending the SCBA proceedings.

On August 18, 2024, a section of SC lawyers formed an interim executive committee of the SCBA, with pro-BNP lawyers AM Mahub Uddin Khokon and Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal, now the attorney general, as its president and secretary respectively for the 2024-25 session.

Ruhul Quddus, however, refused to discharge the responsibilities as the committee's secretary, as he had been elected to the same post several times earlier.

SCBA Assistant Secretary Mahfuzur was later given the charge.

## Delhi names new envoy to Dhaka

FROM PAGE 16

a non-Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer being named to the role, and the move comes as New Delhi seeks to reset ties with Dhaka.

Trivedi will replace IFS officer Pranay Verma, who is moving to Brussels as India's envoy to the European Union and the Kingdom of Belgium.

A former railway minister (2011-2012) and union minister of state for health and family welfare (2009-2011) under former prime minister Manmohan Singh's cabinet, Trivedi served as an MP from 2009 to 2019, representing the Barrakpore constituency in West Bengal for the All India Trinamool Congress. He joined the BJP in 2021.

Ties between New Delhi and Dhaka were strained after former prime

minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India in August 2024 following weeks of widespread student-led protests against her Awami League government.

In April, Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman visited New Delhi, marking the first high-level bilateral engagement hosted by India since the Awami League government was ousted.

Diplomatic sources said it is surprising to see India, for the first time, has appointed a politician as a high commissioner to Bangladesh.

"It is rare that India makes political appointments to such posts. Even if it does, the appointees have careers in diplomacy," a diplomatic source said.

When asked, Prof Sreeradha Datta, who teaches international affairs at O.P. Jindal Global University, thinks this decision could emerge out of

India's willingness to improve political relationships with the BNP as a party.

India is viewed as having a strong relationship with the Awami League but has faced criticism for that, especially during the Awami League regime.

Prof Datta noted that Trivedi speaks Bangla fluently, though he is not Bangalee, and is well versed in Bangladesh's politics.

"This does not mean that the career diplomats are not knowledgeable about it. But I think the Indian government is thinking differently on ways of improving relations with Bangladesh. I would say that's good.

"Trivedi might be considered to understand the sensitivities in the relations better and then handle them accordingly."