



## **Recent Bengali Films: The Evolving Face and the Pulse of Change**

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### ***Abstract***

*Contemporary Bengali cinema has entered a transformer phase, and it is marked by aesthetic experimentation. These recent cinemas have thematic expansion and renewed socio-cultural engagement. Films move beyond formulaic narratives and commercial stereotypes. So, recent cinemas increasingly foreground character-driven storytelling, political consciousness, intergenerational conflict and the films' gendered subjectivity and regional memory. This article captures select films released between 2021 and 2025 to trace how the industry has responded to post-pandemic realities. The films fulfil the audience's expectations and the growing influence of digital streaming platforms. From the intimate cross-religious friendship shown in Dostoji to the reflective biographical tribute in Padatic, from the emotional maturity of Ajogya to the reclamation of the theatrical history in Binodini: Ekti Natir Upakhyan. These contemporary films reveal cinema negotiating between memory and modernity. Genre diversification is evident in science fiction, psychological thrillers, cartoon dramas, and legal romantic comedies. So this further demonstrates the industry's evolving narrative ambition. Simultaneously, streaming platforms such as Hoichoi, Adda-Times, Netflix, Hotstar, and Amazon Prime have expanded the global reach of Bengali cinema. This enables regional stories to enter transitional circuits. Through textual analysis and critical review synthesis, this attempt seeks to argue that recent Bengali cinema embodies a cultural resurgence: resilient, socially responsive, and static. The aesthetic approach in modern cinemas is different from other industries that positions itself at a significant juncture in regional and global film discourse.*

**Keywords:** *Post-COVID, Cinema, Identity, Genre, Innovation, Narratives, etc.*

### **Introduction**

The Bengali film industry has undergone many sea changes, so to speak, in the overall atmosphere and conditions that blend tradition and modernity. Innovations in recent Bengali films: no longer do they restrict themselves to formulaic narratives; they are courageous, experimenting with form, socially and politically relevant subjects, and themes the audience can relate to. From urban confusions to rural traumas, personal identity to collective memory, the new wave in Bengali Films is not so much an artistic label as a state of mind, and the journey through the revisionist days of Bengali films, as currently predicated, is as deep as it is wide for the industry.

### **Post-pandemic Revival and Humanistic Narratives (2021 to 2023)**

The first relationship that grows beyond blood ties is friendship; childhood friendships are close and save us from dangers and misfortunes throughout our lives. Director Prasun Chatterjee skillfully captures the friendship between Palash and Shafiqul, who are of different religions, in his film Dostojee (2021). Set in a remote village near the Indo-Bangladesh border, the story follows the two boys who share uniforms, tattoos, and dreams, attending school together

against rising communal tension. Their contrasting personalities, Palash being more studious and Shafiqul carefree, add depth to their camaraderie. By delivering natural performances by the two actors and others, the film is a quietly powerful tribute to friendship, memory, and a childhood untouched by political borders. The COVID-19 pandemic shut down the Bengali Films, and Dostojee brought back the pulse of change, uplifting the Bengali Films. Besides, *Projapoti* (23 December 2022) by Avijit Sen, *Karnasubarna Guptodhon* (30 September 2022) by Dhrubo Banerjee, *Ballabhpurer Roopkotha* (2022) by Anirban Bhattachariya, *Maayakumari* (13 January 2023) by Arindam Sil, *Chengiz* (10 February 2023) by Rejesh Ganguly, *Ardhangini* (2 June 2023) by Kaushik Ganguly and *Kabuliwalah* (22 December 2023) mark a return to character-driven storytelling, prioritising depth over glamour. Bengali Films after COVID are witnessing a cultural awakening, grounded in local stories but resonating with universal emotion.

### **Creative Expansion and Genre Innovation (2024)**

Bengali Films, in 2024, demonstrate both creative diversity and commercial success. Director Kaushik Ganguly released the film *Ajogya* (7 June 2024), exploring mature, unrequited love with emotional depth. Srijit Mukherjee, a talented director, paid tribute to Mrinal Sen with Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak in his biopic film *Padatik* (15 August 2024), where Chanchal Chowdhury portrayed Mrinal Sen, the famous Bengali Director. A rare entry in Bengali sci-fi cinema, *Boomerang* (7 June 2024), by Souvik Kundu, follows a scientist who creates a humanoid robot modelled on his wife, only for it to spiral out of control. The film blends futuristic thrills with domestic drama, anchored by Jeet's performance. Poorna Banerjee, an esteemed journalist in *The Times of India*, observed and praised the "smartly written script, hilarious dialogue," noting they "elevate what appears to be a fairly straightforward story". Director Anjan Dutta, in his Film *Chaalchitra Ekhon* (10 May 2024), captures a young actor clashing with a legendary filmmaker. This meta-narrative examines generational tension. It's creative idealism and reflection, layered with introspective peace on art, ego, and generational divides. The filmmakers blend genre innovation with poignant narratives, while genre films such as *Boomerang* and *Bhootpori* significantly expand the industry's thematic horizons. But the regional-language, real-crime incident-adaptation film *Kaliachak Chapter-I* uplifts and nurtures a new style in Bengali Films, highlighting an introspective yet outward-looking industry. Ratool Mukherjee experiments and directs the film from the perspective of a real incident, which is the 2021 murder of four family members in *Kaliachak*, West Bengal. *Bahurup* (8 October 2024) by Nandita Roy and Shiboprosad Mukherjee was successful at the box office and later released on ZEE5 for home media in May 2025. The film marks a healthy appetite for both mainstream and unconventional films. This year can be remembered as pivotal, as it rejuvenated Bengali storytelling across multiple platforms.

### **Global Aspirations and Narrative Complexity (2025)**

Bengali films, in 2025, pave the path towards Global standards, presenting a rich mix, from gritty courtroom dramas to modern detective narratives, heartfelt family dramas to introspective one-night tales, and legal rom-coms. Devraj Sinha directed his debut drama film, *Felubakshi* (17 January 2025), a modern homage to classic Bengali detectives, grounded in mystery, family emotion, and a smartly assembled cast. Animesh Mukherjee hires *Felubakshi* as his private investigator to uncover his son's mysterious death and his assistant's involvement in a conspiracy within the Mukherjee family. Beginning as a single investigation, it spirals into a chain of model murders, unearthing long-buried secrets and emotional conflicts. Soham Chakraborty, Madhumita Sarkar, and Pori Moni play significant roles in the film. The film is named after the famous characters, *Feluda* and *Byomkesh Bakshi*. This film also brings back the family conflicts, emotional outbursts, and responsibilities of Bengali Films.

#### **a. Postmodern Truth and Emotional Memory**

Shotyi Bole Shotyi Kichu Nei (17 January 2025) is a film about modern relationships facing the complexities of truth. The film shows a glimpse of a journalist entangled with personal and professional dilemmas and reveals how honesty can be manipulated. Truth is never absolute in the world the film encapsulates, where morality, media effects, and emotional conflict collide. Critically acclaimed, the film, which is rated average, is successful as an art film. Directed by Ram Kamal Mukherjee, with Rukmini Maitra, Kaushik Ganguly, and Rahul Bose, the Film Binodini: Ekti Natir Upakhyan (23 January 2025) is a biographical epic dramatising the life of Binodini Dasi, a 19th-century Bengali theatre legend who rose from courtesan to stage icon. Rukmini Maitra's portrayal is poised and emotionally layered, encapsulating the character's defiance within patriarchal society. Kaushik Ganguly and Rahul Bose play supporting roles; the ensemble lends gravitas to a period narrative reaching into theatrical history. As Mukherjee revisits pre-colonial theatre, the film significantly reclaims lost female voices in Bengali cultural heritage. Omorsangi (31 January 2025), directed by Dibya Chatterjee, is a supernatural romantic comedy about a girl-stricken novelist, Vikram Chatterjee, who is haunted by the ghost of his late girlfriend, Sohini Sarkar. The film covers humour, romance and introspection. Later, Sohini returns to help him cope with her death and re-enters the world. Arpan Basu has directed the film Ei Raat Tomar Amaar (31 January 2025), set against a rainy night in Kolkata. The film is about an unexpected reunion between two estranged lovers. They seek shelter and confront unresolved emotions, and memories flood in, blurring the lines between past and present. The director artfully crafts a tale of love, regret, and fleeting connection in which a single night changes everything yet promises nothing.

#### **b. Generational Conflict and Moral Reckoning**

The Father-son relationship is depicted in the film Babu Sona (14 February 2025) by Arghadeep Chatterjee, which basically encapsulates the emotional bond set against the backdrop of urban loneliness and fading dreams. Here, ageing Babu navigates his estranged son Sona. The film deeply captures the emotional distance, generational conflict, and the longing for reconciliation, where the emotion outweighs money and mechanical outbursts. So, it is a film about a heartfelt portrayal of love, memory and redemption. Mayanagar (14 February 2025) is directed by Indranil Roy Chaudhury. He points out the murky world of media politics in this film. The film depicts a charismatic TV journalist, Ritabrata Roy (Ritwick Chakraborty), who is torn between ambition and ethics. Suchitra Sen (Rafiath Rashid Mithila) and Kamalika play vital roles. In the film, Indra unravels the characters' power struggles, manipulations, and personal dilemmas against the backdrop of the rapidly changing news landscape. Ron Raj directed the film Porichoy Gupta (21 February 2025), set in mid-20th-century Bengal, following a reclusive landlord and his archaeologist friend as they uncover buried mysteries in their intertwined lives. Here, the landlord is Ritwick Chakraborty, who plays a significant role, and Indraneil Sengupta portrays an archaeologist. Their relationship deepens, revealing the shared secrets and hidden identities. These challenge their loyalty and reshape their destinies. Mukhoshe Manushe Khela (28 February 2025), a drama-thriller by Orpheus Mukhoty, captures the businessman Joy Sanyand's destiny, with caustic conspiracies plotted by his opponents for a web of murder, and he has to face the gloomy secrets as the mystery unfolds around him.

#### **c. Identity, Fate, Obsession, Moral Conflict**

Breaking the traditional path, writer and director Abhijit Chowdhuri weaves the storyline of the sci-fi film Dhrubor Aschorjo Jibon (28 February 2025). Dhrubo faces a life-changing crime that pits his ideals against survival, leading him into four parallel realities. When he comes to protect his girlfriend's family, he has to make a choice which leads him into moral, emotional, and criminal dilemmas. Dhrubo is shaped by fate and reshaped by love and loyalty; his journey questions the identities, Justice, and destinies that steer our lives. Another film, directed by Anonno Mamun, is a gripping Bangladeshi-Indian psychological crime thriller named Dorod

(28 February 2025). The film depicts Dulu Mia, a devoted husband whose wife develops an unhealthy obsession with a film star. When it develops, we find that a string of murders and shocking mental health revelations unravel, thrusting Dulu into a chilling mystery. Dorod encapsulates love, obsession, and tragic consequences in a tightly woven narrative. It keeps viewers on edge, a startling revelation that shatters their perspectives.

#### **d. Narration of Traumatic Experience**

Mainak Bhoumik, a director, releases his psychological thriller *Grihostho* (7 March 2025), starring Ritabhari Chakraborty as Aparna, a woman haunted by past trauma who suspects her neighbour. The film stars Sourav Das (Partha), Aryann Bhowmik (Debu), Anusha Visvanathan (Tai) and others. As her mental health deteriorates, Aparna is unsure whether the danger she perceives is real or imagined, driving a tense, ambiguous narrative fueled by strong performances. In the direction of Subhankar Bhowmik, *Alakshye Ritwik* (14 March 2025) is a biographical drama film that traces the life of the visionary Bengali filmmaker Ritwik Kumar Ghatak from the ages of 35 to 50. Featuring Silajit Majumdar as Ghatak and Payel Sarkar as his wife Surama. The film captured his tumultuous personal struggles and revolutionised the cinematic legacy, enduring themes of loss, identity, and social irony. It is a tribute film on his genius while spotlighting his raw, unvarnished spirit.

#### **e. Trauma, Memory, Love, and Reconciliation**

The comedy genre is depicted with slapstick humour in the film *Hangama.com* (30 March 2025) directed by Krishnendu Chatterjee. The film features a charming story in which two lovers, one Ghoti and one Bengali, attempt to reconcile their families' cultural rivalry through romance. Here, Patriarch Birat Bhadra (Rajatava Dutta) and Bankim (Kharaj Mukherjee), whose children (Bonny Sengupta and Koushani Mukherjee) fall in love. Critics, in the book *my show*, comment that the film is full of amusing, slapstick, quirky characters, especially Bishwanath Basu. Srijit Mukherjee, a famous Bengali director, has made the film *Killbill Society: Amader Kono Sakha Nei* (11 April 2025), in which Parambrata Chatterjee plays the contract killer Mrityunjoy Kar, and Koushani Mukherjee plays the star. Poorna Aich attempts suicide because her scandalous video is driving her, and she hires Mrityunjoy to kill her. But, instead of doing this, he approaches and makes a bond of love. Through their evolving connection, they rediscover hope, purpose, and the value of life. Parambrata Chattopadhyay directed the film *Puratawn* (11 April 2025). The film reveals a poignant psychological aspect about an elderly couple who try to restore peace. The couple is Aparna Sen and Anjan Datta, who spend their wedding anniversary alone. Throughout one night, the couple rejuvenates, sharing regrets, joy, and enduring love, capturing the complexities of long-term companionship.

#### **f. Medico-Crime, Redemption, and Resilience**

A gripping medico-crime thriller, released and directed by Arindam Bhattacharya, is *Durgapur Junction* (25 April 2025). Vikram Chatterjee, Swastika Mukherjee, and Ekavali Khanna are the stars of the film. Set in Durgapur, the plot follows CID officer Soumya Sen (Chatterjee) investigating a death tied to cyanide-laced vitamin capsules. Here, Ushashie is a journalist, exposes a critical clue together with Soumya to uncover a deadly pharmaceutical racket, while K.P. Gouri (Khanna) assists the investigation as their senior. A comedy and a suspense film is *Check in Cheque Out* (18 April 2025), which is about an ambitious young Heiress, Namrata Mitra, played by Isha Saha. She takes drastic measures to save her family's hotel, which has fallen into disrepair. In the direction of Satrajit Sen, the stars of the film are Isha Saha as Namrata Mitra, Ratul Shankar as Girindra Mohan Mitra, and Chandreyee Ghosh as Kabita. So, Namrata attempts to resolve their quiriness. She often finds herself in supernatural dilemmas, unexpected bonds form, but her efforts invite both complications and comedic twists. A drama film, *Annapurna* (25 April 2025), is directed by Anshuman Pratyush. Ananya Chatterjee as

Annapurna, Rishabh Basu as Roni, Ditipriya Roy as Anandi, and Arna Mukhopadhyay as Atanu play significant roles in the film. The film is set in London. Annapurna, the film, portrays a lonely mother who finds renewed purpose by launching a food business. This business has flourished, and the mother earns well from this. The film is a heartfelt family story about her resilience and passion, inspiring her to prove that it's never too late to chase dreams.

#### **g. Memory, Sacrifice, and Marital Reconciliation**

Jitt Chakraborty directed the film *Aarii* (25 April 2025), which is about a woman, Joya Sen, played by Mousumi Chatterjee and her son Joy, played by Yash Das Gupta. Aditi, played by Nusrat Jahan, is a passionate writer. Following the death of Joya's husband, she struggles with memory loss while Joy sacrifices his ambition to care for her. When Aditi enters their lives, she brings hope. The local leader brings danger to them by prompting Joy to shield his mother and their fragile piece. The legal romantic comedy film *Shreeman Vs Shreemati* (1 May 2025) is directed by Pathikrit Basu. Mithun Chakraborty as Justice Amal Choudhary plays a significant role in the film. Anjana Basu, Anjan Dutta, Modhumita Sarkar, and Parambrata Chattopadhyay are stars of the film. A judge who does not admit and grant divorces challenges a young couple on the brink of separation to swap roles. Later in the film, they uncover the judge's 27-year marital stalemate. They unite to help him rekindle his long-lost love. So, the film blends humour and generational insight.

#### **h. Intergenerational Bonds and Cultural Intrigue**

Co-directed by Nandita Roy and Shiva Prasad Mukherjee, the film *Amar Boss* (9 May 2025) is about a family workplace drama featuring Rakhi Gulzar, Shibaprasad Mukharji and Srabanti Chatterjee. Centred on Animesh, a publishing house owner, strengthened by his wife, the arrival of his retired nurse mother (Rakhi) at work sparks the creation of an intergenerational daycare. The nurse's presence disrupts the office hierarchy and personal bonds. So, the office hierarchy and personnel bonds transform both the workplace atmosphere and his relationship with his family. Joydeep Mukherjee's black comedy detective thriller film, *The Eken: Benaras e Bibhishika* (16 May 2025) stars Anirban Chakrabarti (Eken Babu), Suhotra Mukhopadhyay (Bapi), Somak Ghosh (Pramatha), Saswata Chatterjee, Gaurav Chakrabarty and Isha Saha. Eken Babu, on holiday, goes to the city of Varanasi and uncovers cryptic messages that conspired against and threatened the city during the festival of Masaan Holi. Against the mystic Ganga backdrop, Eken Babu, Bapi, and Pramatha, the trio, racing against time, must decode hidden signals and thwart the plot before it brings chaos to the celebrations. In the direction of Raja Chanda, the film *Chandrabindoo* (23 May 2025) explores supernatural themes, starring Ankush Hazra (Arnab Martin) and Oindrila Sen (Meera), with Shantilal Mukherjee, Tulika Basu, Anirban Chakrabarti and Saheb Bhattacharya in pivotal roles.

#### **i. Crime, Loyalty, and Fractured Brotherhood**

A Bengali action thriller film, *Bramhaarjun* (23 May 2025), directed by Souvik Dey and produced by Meena Sethi Mandal, is about Brahma and Arjun. Their parents died when they were very young. So, they are taken in by Naresh Pal, a cannabis trafficker operating in Jharkhand. Pal's 'Galudi' faction and Alam Sheikh's 'Sheikmuluk' faction, both belonging to the area, are divided into smuggling networks. As they grow up within Pal's organisation, Brahma becomes involved in its activities and forms a romantic attachment to Mehzabin. Later, she is presented in promotional materials as a member of Sheikh's extended network. While Arjun reconnects with an old childhood friend, he becomes entangled in brutal power struggles. Rivalry between the Galudi and Sheikmuluk groups intensifies, leading to shifting loyalties and open conflict. So, the film portrays ambition, betrayal, and survival colliding against the backdrop of rural crime in this intense, gritty saga.

#### **Conclusion**

In the end, the recent Bengali films flourish and rejuvenate, setting the stage for a vibrant resurgence with several anticipated releases. The film *Abar Hawa Badal*, which rekindles nostalgia, will be released on 4 July 2025; the official cast has yet to be confirmed. Directed by Subhrajit Mitra and produced by Anirudha Dasgupta, the film *Devi Chowdhurani* is based on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's famous Bengali novel of the same name, *Debi Chowdhurani*. The film portrays the legendary tale of a female freedom fighter. *Raas*, *Bhaggyolokkhi*, *Santa*, *Rabindra Kabya Rahasya*, *Oporichito*, *Ekhane Andhokar*, and *Apanjan* promise a mix of thrillers, mysteries, and social dramas. Platforms like Hoichoi, Addatimes, and Netflix have been instrumental in bringing regional content to global audiences, expanding Bengali cinema's reach and narrative ambition in recent years. So, the new voices and old directors like Kaushik Ganguly, Srijit Mukherjee are shaping a cinema that is emotionally rich and culturally grounded. With diverse releases across theatres and digital platforms, Bengali cinema stands at a new juncture that is resilient, relevant, and ready to embrace global cinematic conversations.

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