

# Mujib: The Making of a Nation

*Mujib: The Making of a Nation* is a 2023 epic biographical film based on the life of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father and first president of Bangladesh who is popularly known as *Bangabandhu* (lit. 'Friend of Bengal'). A co-production between Bangladesh and India, the film was directed by Shyam Benegal and stars Arifin Shuvoo in the titular role.<sup>[4]</sup>

The film was produced on the occasion of Mujib Year.<sup>[5]</sup> Arifin Shuvoo, Nusrat Imrose Tisha and Zayed Khan has taken only ₳1<sup>[a]</sup> as remuneration for acting in this film.<sup>[7][8][9]</sup> The film was scheduled to start production on 18 March 2020, a day after Bangabandhu's birth centenary, but it was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>[10]</sup>

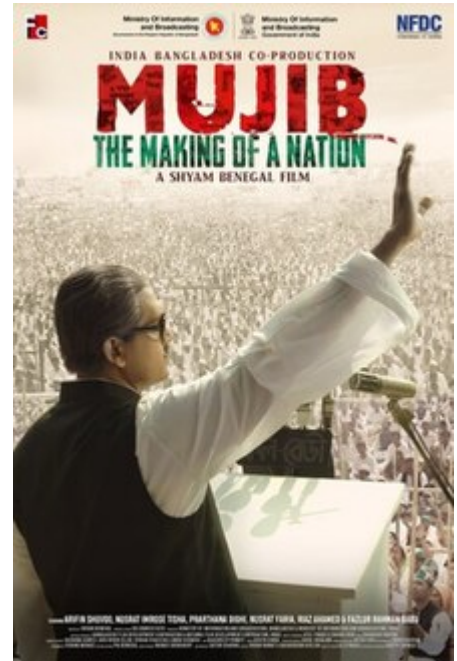
Its art director is Nitish Roy. Pia Benegal is responsible for costume of the film as costume director. Dayal Nihalani is the associate Director. Its screenplay was done by Atul Tiwari and Shama Zaidi.<sup>[11]</sup> Its executive producer is Nujhat Yasmin.<sup>[1]</sup> Its line producer is Mohammad Hossain Jaimy.<sup>[12]</sup> Its dialogue writer, script supervisor, and dialogue coach is Sadhana Ahmed.<sup>[13]</sup> Its casting director is Shyam Rawat and Baharuddin Khelon.<sup>[14][15]</sup> This is the first government produced biopic about Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.<sup>[16]</sup>

## Plot

On 10 January 1972,<sup>[17]</sup> Sheikh Mujibur Rahman returned to Bangladesh after being release from Pakistani jail. The leaders present give Mujib a grand welcome with garlands.<sup>[18][19]</sup> In the presence of millions of people, Sheikh Mujib delivers his speech and gave the message of reconstruction of the new born country.<sup>[20]</sup> Then Bangabandhu's consort is narrated about the events from Mujib's childhood.<sup>[21]</sup>

Mujib meets Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy as a student leader. Suhrawardy is impressed by Mujib's loyalty.<sup>[22]</sup> Mujib's political career begins during British Raj.<sup>[23]</sup> After studying in Calcutta Baker Hostel, Mujib gets admission in Dhaka University.<sup>[24][25]</sup> On February 21, 1952, the students of Dhaka University takes out a procession demanding Bengali as national language. When the procession arrives out through the gate of the university, the police opens fire directly on them causing heavy casualties.<sup>[26]</sup>

## Mujib: The Making of a Nation



Official poster

Original title	মুজিব: একটি জাতির রূপকার
Directed by	Shyam Benegal
Screenplay by	Atul Tiwari Shama Zaidi
Starring	Arifin Shuvoo Nusrat Imrose Tisha Fazlur Rahman Babu Nusraat Faria Riaz Ahmed Dilara Zaman Tauquir Ahmed Raisul Islam Asad
Narrated by	Nusrat Imrose Tisha

During this time, Sheikh Mujib goes on hunger strike while imprisoned.<sup>[27]</sup> Apart from participating in the Bengali language movement, Sheikh Mujib plays an active role in the anti-Ayub movement. Tajuddin Ahmad, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Manik Mia and Shamsul Huq plays supporting roles to Sheikh Mujib.<sup>[28]</sup>

Sheikh Mujib rise to fame in East Pakistan politics by discussing, criticizing, raising demands with the top leaders of Pakistan and his fight for secularism and autonomy. Mujib was inspired by Bertrand Russell's philosophy and advocated freedom of the press.<sup>[29][30]</sup> He also protests outside parliament.<sup>[31]</sup> During this time he is repeatedly arrested and imprisoned.<sup>[32]</sup> In 1966 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announces 6 point demands. In continuation of this, the mass uprising in 1969 and the Pakistani general election in 1970 are held.<sup>[33]</sup>

On March 7, 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gives his 7th March Speech at the Race Course Maidan.<sup>[34]</sup> He is rearrested by Pakistani Army and imprisoned in West Pakistan after sending a message declaring Bangladesh as an independent state.<sup>[35]</sup> Begum Mujib became politically astute in Sheikh Mujib's absence. During the Bangladesh Liberation War, the Government of India provides uninterrupted assistance and support to Bangladesh.<sup>[36]</sup> Bangladesh achieves the final victory through the surrender of the Pakistani army.<sup>[37]</sup>

In 1972, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman returns to Bangladesh. After becoming prime minister he successes in taking the guidance of the elders and taking timely decisions.<sup>[38]</sup> During this time the constitution is framed and first general election is held.<sup>[39]</sup> He refuses to eat rice during the 1974 famine.<sup>[40]</sup> Later, a provisional national party called 'Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League' is formed and Mujib becomes the president of Bangladesh.<sup>[41]</sup>

Mujib spends his last days trying to build an exploitation-free society. At this time, Sheikh Mujib's cabinet minister Khondaker Mostaq Ahmad and Taher Uddin Thakur held a secret conspiratorial meeting with some military personnel to oust him from the presidency.<sup>[42]</sup> On the night of August 15, 1975, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members are killed by a group of military officers.<sup>[43]</sup>

<b>Cinematography</b>	Akashdeep Pandey
<b>Edited by</b>	Aseem Sinha
<b>Music by</b>	Shantanu Moitra
<b>Production companies</b>	<u>Bangladesh Film Development Corporation</u> <u>National Film Development Corporation of India</u>
<b>Distributed by</b>	Jaaz Multimedia
<b>Release dates</b>	13 October 2023 (Bangladesh) 27 October 2023 (India)
<b>Running time</b>	178 minutes
<b>Countries</b>	Bangladesh India
<b>Languages</b>	Bengali Hindi
<b>Budget</b>	₹83 crore <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Box office</b>	₹41 million (Internationally) <sup>[2][3]</sup>

## Cast

- Arifin Shuvoo as Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (a.k.a. Bangabandhu)
  - Dibya Joyti as younger Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
- Nusrat Imrose Tisha as Renu (Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib)
  - Prarthana Fardin Dighi as younger Renu
- Nusraat Faria as Sheikh Hasina
  - Wania Zarin Anvita as Sheikh Hasina, between the ages of 8 and 12 years.

- Shahidul Alam Sachchu as A. K. Fazlul Huq
- Deepak Antani as Mahatma Gandhi
- Rahul Singh as Muhammad Ali Jinnah
- Fazlur Rahman Babu as Khondaker Mostaq Ahmad
- Raisul Islam Asad as Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani
- Riaz as Tajuddin Ahmad
- Gazi Rakayet as Abdul Hamid, Renu's grandfather
- Gayasuddin Sheikh as M. A. Wazed Miah, Hasina's husband
- Abeer Soofi as Major Ashok Tara (a war hero)
- Tushar Khan as Manik Mia
- Hasan Dip as a Police
- Rajit Kapur as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
- Anoop Puri as Yahya Khan, Pakistani president
- Shatabdi Wadud as a Pakistani Army officer
- Raajan Modi as Payenda Khan, punjabi army chief
- Amit Ghosh as a Pakistani cop
- Khairul Alam Sabuj as the father of Bangabandhu, Sheikh Lutfar Rahman 65–94 years.
  - Chanchal Chowdhury as Sheikh Lutfar Rahman between the ages of 45 and 65 years
- Dilara Zaman as the mother of Bangabandhu, Sayera Khatun
  - Sangeeta Chowdhury as younger Sayera Khatun
- Tauquir Ahmed as Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy
- Anjum Khan as Akhter, Suhrawardy's daughter
- Dewan Mohammad Saiful Islam Sayem Samad as Syed Nazrul Islam
- Somu Chowdhury as Qamaruzzaman
- Khalilur Rahman Quadri as Mansur Ali
- Abhijit Sen Gupta as General MAG Osmani
- Raju Sarker as General Ayub Khan
- Sabila Nur as Sheikh Rehana
  - Samanta Rahman as younger Sheikh Rehana
- Somnath Chatterjee as Sheikh Kamal
  - Ishrak Turjo as younger Sheikh Kamal between the ages of 8 and 12 years.
    - Touhid as younger Sheikh Kamal under the age of 5.
- Sharif Siraj as Sheikh Jamal
- Rokeya Prachy as an old lady
- Siam Ahmed as Shamsul Huq
- Azizul Hakim as Abdur Rab Serniabat
- Abul Kalam Azad as a jail guard
- Naziba Bashir as Sultana Kamal
- Zayed Khan as General Tikka Khan
- Swapan Bhattacharya as AFM Mohitul Islam, Mujib's personal assistant
- Irfan Sajjad as Moazzem Hossain
- Ashiul Islam as Mohiuddin Ahmed
- Kamrul Hasan as Taheruddin Thakur
- A.K. Azad Setu as Ziaur Rahman
- Rohan Roy as S.H.M.B Noor Chowdhury, Mujib's assassin

- Chandra Shekhar Dutta as Mohammad Bazlul Huda, partner of Noor
- Anirudh Paul as Moslemuddin
- Elina Shammi as Khaleda Zia
- Nairuj Sifat as Parveen Jamal Rosy
- Sabbir Hossain as Tofail Ahmed
- Mostafizur Noor Imran as Sheikh Fazlul Haque Mani
- Masood Akhtar as a resident of Tungipara
- Jaffna Subaita Hasan as a member of Mujib's family

## Production

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### Background

Until 2016, many people wanted to make a film based on the life story of Bangabandhu, but their initiative was not successful.<sup>[b]</sup> Even before the production of this film, there was a demand to make a biographical film of Bangabandhu as a state initiative.<sup>[44]</sup> Actor Raj from East Pakistan announced to make a film about him titled *Bangabandhu* in 1970.<sup>[45]</sup> In an interview given to the weekly *Chitrati* in 1988, Farooque revealed his plan to make a film about Mujib.<sup>[46]</sup> It was reported by *India Today* in 2008<sup>[47]</sup> that Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury planned to make a film about Bangabandhu titled *The Poet of Politics*. It was rumored that it would be directed by Shyam Benegal and Amitabh Bachchan



Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House in 2017

would be cast as the main character in the film. However, the film was not made.<sup>[48][44]</sup> In 2010, Vibgyor Films had planned to make a film about Bangabandhu in Hollywood. It was learned that the shooting of the film was scheduled to start in 2011.<sup>[49]</sup> Giasuddin Selim wanted to make a film based on *The Unfinished Memoirs*, an autobiography book of Mujib, but he backed out due to lack of budget.<sup>[50]</sup> On 3 December, 2015, the then Minister of Cultural Affairs named Asaduzzaman Noor officially announced the Hasina government's desire to make a biopic of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He also said that his ministry has discussed the matter with the Prime Minister and she has given the green signal.<sup>[51]</sup> Later, Narendra Modi, the Indian prime minister, informed to the Bangladeshi prime minister named Sheikh Hasina the desire to produce a film on the life of her father by his government. His proposal was liked by her.<sup>[52]</sup> However, in that time, Hasina suggested to Modi that Bangladesh should jointly produce the proposed film with India.<sup>[53]</sup> On 17 August 2016, Venkaiah Naidu, the then information minister of India, declared the acceptance of the proposal to assist the production of the biographical film of Bangabandhu by the then information minister of Bangladesh Hasanul Haq Inu.<sup>[54]</sup> On 8 April 2017, in the presence of Sheikh Hasina at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi, Narendra Modi officially announced the joint-production of the film.<sup>[55]</sup>

### Development

The focus of this biopic is completely different, you have to

On 27 August 2017, an agreement was signed between the Government of Bangladesh and India in the capital of India. One of the purposes of the agreement was to make a film on Bangabandhu.<sup>[57]</sup> On 18 March 2018, the Government of Bangladesh announced that the preliminary work of making

understand it. There's a nation's emotions, there's a question of their feelings – I have to respect that, haven't I?

—Shyam Benegal during an interview for the film.<sup>[56]</sup>

the film would start from that year.<sup>[48]</sup> A film committee was formed with 19 people from Bangladesh and India to implement the film project. The coordinator of the committee was the additional secretary of the Ministry of Information of Bangladesh.<sup>[58]</sup> Hasanul Haq Inu organized several meetings regarding Bangabandhu's biopic during his tenure as Information Minister. Film directors and experts participating in the meetings gave their opinion in favor of directing the film by any director of the country. So it was initially decided that the film would be directed by Nasiruddin Yousuff.<sup>[59]</sup> But the film committee chose Shyam Benegal as the director when three directors from India were nominated in July 2018<sup>[60]</sup> to direct the film.<sup>[c][62]</sup> Shyam Benegal accepted the offer to direct the film as he felt that the main character of the film was an interesting character in his time.<sup>[52][d]</sup> On 27 August 2018, Tarana Halim officially announced his name as the director of the film on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh.<sup>[64]</sup> In 2019, it was announced that a three-member expert team from Bangladesh would be formed to assist the film's director. It was decided that the team would include a historian, an acquaintance of Mujib and an experienced film personality.<sup>[60]</sup> Sheikh Hasina initially did not want to be included in the production but Benegal later forced her.<sup>[65]</sup> On 1 April 2019, Shyam Benegal visited Bangladesh to discuss the film project with Sheikh Hasina and film associates.<sup>[58]</sup> The budget of the film was set at ₹4.0 crore at a meeting held in New Delhi on 7 May 2019.<sup>[66]</sup> But it was learned later from Nuzhat Yeasmin, one of executive producers of the film that the budget of this film is ₹8.3 crore.<sup>[e]</sup> Bangladesh has given ₹5.0 crore of the budget and India has given ₹3.3 crore.<sup>[1]</sup> After the Bangladesh delegation visited India on 7 May 2019 and discussed with the Indians, the matter of making the film was finalized.<sup>[67]</sup> On 6 October 2019, the director talked with Sheikh Hasina in a meeting at New Delhi for the film.<sup>[68]</sup> Later another film related agreement was finalised on 14 January 2020.<sup>[69]</sup> Shyam Benegal further said that this is a Bengali nationalist film.<sup>[56]</sup> Sheikh Hasina wanted the language of the film to be in English or Hindustani or Urdu. But Shyam Benegal decided to make the film in Bengali, the state language of Bangladesh.<sup>[f][70]</sup> Benegal does not know Bengali, for this reason he had to enlist the help of translators.<sup>[71]</sup> Two years later its official title was announced.<sup>[72]</sup> The director gave the name to the film as the meaning of Mujib is significant.<sup>[70]</sup>

## Character

Character development of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a difficult task for Benegal. As steadfast as Mujib was to his political ideals and movements, he gave importance to his family And he was more of a family man than all the important personalities of the Indian subcontinent. And so his life is presented in this film from an emotional point of view.<sup>[70]</sup> The director said that Mujib will be portrayed in a balanced manner in the film.<sup>[73]</sup>

## Writing

Atul Tiwari planned to visit Bangladesh in May 2019 as part of his film research. Piplu Khan was his helper and research related assistant.<sup>[74]</sup> Atul Tiwari visited Bangladesh with Shama Zaidi on 19 May and investigated the biopic related historical places.<sup>[66]</sup> As part of the research for the film, Sheikh Hasina assisted the director with information about her father's life. Although the film script was reviewed by her, she did not demand any major change in the script.<sup>[52]</sup> In order to complete the screenplay, Shama Zaidi and Atul Tiwari adhered to research paper on the main character of the film written by Gowher Rizvi. As part of the research, the screenwriters collected information from people associated with Bangabandhu. A

scriptwriters' committee was formed to write the script for the film. Anam Biswas, Gias Uddin Selim, Shihab Shaheen and Sadhana Ahmed were selected as members of this committee. Asaduzzaman Noor assisted the members as an advisor to the committee.<sup>[13]</sup> All kinds of historical works from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan have been taken for its screenplay.<sup>[65]</sup> From February to August 2020, many minor corrections was made to the screenplay of the film.<sup>[75]</sup>

## Casting



Shyam Benegal ensured that most of the performers in the film were from Bangladesh.<sup>[56][g]</sup> Auditions were held in Bangladesh and India<sup>[h]</sup> from January to February 2020 for the casting of the film. Apart from various performers, Soumya Jyoti, Tariq Anam Khan, Shamima Nazneen, Masuma Rahman Nabila,<sup>[76]</sup> Jaya Ahsan and Kaushik Sen<sup>[56]</sup> were also present at the auditions.<sup>[15][77]</sup> According to a report in the Bangla Tribune on 7 February 2020, Dilara Zaman has been finalized as the cast of the film in January. Besides, the names of Fazlur Rahman Babu and Tauquir Ahmed have also been finalized, says the report.<sup>[78]</sup> A draft list of castings for the film contain 50 actors was made on 4 March 2020.<sup>[79][i]</sup> According to a report by Bangla Tribune, Sheikh Hasina's wishes would prevail in selecting actor for the lead role in the film. Her choice for the role was Amitabh Bachchan. But in the pre-production, she could not prefer him because Bachchan was older in that time.<sup>[80]</sup> The director said that he was looking for a slim actor for the main character Sheikh Mujibur Rahman because he was not fat in his early life.<sup>[81]</sup> During the auditions, a TV drama starring Arifin Shuvoo was being screened at the Mumbai International Film Festival. One of the film's screenwriter Shama Zaidi, who was present at the film festival, contacted him after watching the TV drama and requested to meet the director. Although some members of the production team considered Shuvoo unsuitable for the lead role, the director allowed him to audition.<sup>[82]</sup> He was one of the 15 actors selected for the role of Bangabandhu who was finalized after 5 rounds of auditions.<sup>[14]</sup> In an interview, the director explained why Arifin Shuvo was cast as the main character, saying that he was the perfect person for the role.<sup>[56]</sup> Although it was decided to cast Jyotika Jyoti and Jannatul Sumaiya Himi as Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib and Sheikh Hasina in the qualifying round, they were later dropped.<sup>[83][84]</sup> Rawnak Hasan was selected for acting as Sheikh Kamal and was later dropped in the day of his contract signing day<sup>[85]</sup> because the director thought that he was not perfect for the role.<sup>[86]</sup> He was replaced by Somnath Chatterjee in December 2020.<sup>[87]</sup> Although Ferdous Ahmed was finalised for Tajuddin Ahmad's role, Riaz Ahmed was later hired to play the role<sup>[88]</sup> for visa related issue.<sup>[89][j]</sup> The production team was supposed to sign the contract with the selected actors in March 2021, but due to the inability to start



shooting, it was decided in September.<sup>[91]</sup> After the first round of casting, the second round of casting is done online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the next step, casting director Baharuddin Khelon selected 60 people for acting and sent their names to the director. Benegal finalized their names from the list after discussion.<sup>[75]</sup> Irfan Sajjad was finalized for the role of Moazzem Hossain on 17 November 2021. Then on 22 November, Zayed Khan signed the contract for the role of Tikka Khan.<sup>[92]</sup>

## Costume

In December 2019, the production team reached out to costume designers in Bangladesh as well as clothing stores in the country to get an idea of the costumes.<sup>[93]</sup> The costume designer of the film is Pia Benegal. The costumes for the film have been made in multiple costume factory in Mumbai Film City. For the film, research has been done on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's costume and especially Mujib coat. According to Pia Benegal, the idea of Mujib coat as a costume was extraordinary and convenient, the collar of which could be easily changed.<sup>[62]</sup>

## Filming

The shooting of the film was originally scheduled to start before 2018 Bangladeshi general election.<sup>[94]</sup> Then the date was shifted to November 2019.<sup>[74]</sup> On 7 May 2019, the director stated his team's desire to complete its filming in 80 days.<sup>[95]</sup> Later the date was changed to 18 March 2020, but suspended.<sup>[10]</sup> As per the initial plan, indoor shooting of the film was to be done in Kolkata and outdoor shooting in Bangladesh.<sup>[93]</sup> The film's shooting started with muhurat shot under the working title *Bangabandhu: The Making of a Nation*<sup>[70][72]</sup> on 21 January 2021, in India.<sup>[k]</sup> The first phase of the shooting was planned to be completed in the country within 100 days<sup>[69]</sup> and it was completed on 4 April, 2021.<sup>[97]</sup> It was informed that the scenes of the liberation war would be shot in the second phase.<sup>[69]</sup> The shooting of the film had to be postponed many times due to the COVID-19 lockdown in India<sup>[98]</sup> and Cyclone Tauktae and Yaas.<sup>[99]</sup> From 20 November, several scenes of the film were shot in many places of Bangladesh as well.<sup>[1]</sup> The shooting for 7 March Speech of Bangabandhu scenes took place on 23 November 2021 at the football field of Dhaka College.<sup>[103]</sup> On 4 December 2021, a scene of the Bengali language movement was captured at Madhur Canteen.<sup>[104]</sup> The shooting of the second phase ended after 59 days.<sup>[105]</sup> As of April 2022, it is known that A total of 960 minutes were recorded as draft footage.<sup>[106]</sup> According to a report of Samakal on 11 September 2022, the production team is thinking of re-shooting some scenes.<sup>[107]</sup>

## Editing and visual effects

In March 2022, it was reported by Prothom Alo that post-production of the film had already begun.<sup>[72]</sup> It was planned to do the post-production in Mumbai.<sup>[95]</sup> Benegal stated that post-production is likely to be completed by June, 2022.<sup>[108]</sup> The editing of the film was supervised by a team from Bangladeshi government. However, due to the trailer controversy in May 2022, the production team started re-editing the footages of the film. Bangladeshi film experts will be consulted after editing the film on the advice of the supervising team. If they do not object, the film will be released only after showing it to Sheikh Hasina. According to a report of Samakal on 11 September 2022, Makuta VFX was appointed for visual effects of the film.<sup>[59][107]</sup> On 12 September 2022, Hasan Mahmud stated that the film is ready for release.<sup>[109]</sup>

## Music

In 2021, the production team contacted Zahid Akbar to compose one of the song for the film. The song was named *Ochin Majhi* (lit. 'The mysterious boatman') whose composer and singer was Shantanu Moitra, the music director of the film. It is the first music sang by him for any film.<sup>[110][111]</sup> The director asked music director Moitra to refrain from putting pressure on himself while working. While working on the film's music, he wanted to incorporate Bangladeshi folk music influences. He had to watch the film half a hundred times for inspiration while producing the background music.<sup>[112]</sup>

## Soundtrack

Track listing					<i>Mujib: The Making of a Nation</i> Soundtrack album by <u>Shantanu Moitra</u>
No.	Title	Lyrics	Singer(s)	Length	
1.	"Ochin Majhi"	<u>Zahid Akbar</u>	Rathijit Bhattacharjee	2:30	
2.	"Ki Ki Jinish Enecho Dulal"	Traditional	Urmi Chowdhury	2:18	
3.	"Pube te Uthilo Bhanu"	Traditional	Niranjan Haldar	2:20	
4.	"Sajo Sundori Koinya"	Traditional	Urmi Chowdhury	2:33	
5.	"Marsiya"	<u>Shantanu Moitra</u>	<u>Shreya Ghoshal</u>	3:28	
6.	"Amar Sonar Bangla"	<u>Rabindranath Tagore</u>	Riza Dev, Saptaparni Bose, Trisha Das, Abhishruti Mukherjee, Sristita Singha, Smriti Majumder, Soumyabrata Banerjee, Soumyadipta Mukherjee, Aryak Chatterjee, Ritwik Paul, Suman Das and Debashish Vaidya		
7.	"Chol Chol Chol"	<u>Kazi Nazrul Islam</u>			
8.	"Pak Sar Zameen Shad Baad"	<u>Hafeez Jalandhari</u>			

## Criticism and legacy



There was a lot of interest among Bangladeshis to know who will play the main character in the film. Some people proposed Amitabh Bachchan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Boman Irani, Adil Hussain, Prosenjit Chatterjee, Pijush Bandyopadhyay and Tariq Anam Khan as main character. Some netizens edited the pictures of many actors and made their mustaches and hair look exactly like Bangabandhu and posted them on social media.<sup>[113]</sup>

Shyam Benegal said that he was happy to direct the film and praised Bangabandhu who was a friend of India.<sup>[114]</sup> Commenting on the film, Bangabandhu's daughter, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was optimistic about the film. Directed by Shyam Benegal, the film will be accepted as a milestone in the Bangladeshi cinema history, she said positively.<sup>[115]</sup>

After watching the film, Bidisha Ershad praised it and expressed her interest in producing a film on the biography of her husband, former President of Bangladesh Hossain Mohammad Ershad.<sup>[116]</sup>

## Director

Though it was decided to make a film about Bangabandhu, the news of proposing the names of three Indian directors as the director of the film made many Bangladeshis unhappy.<sup>[71]</sup> Some famous film related figures of Bangladesh criticized it. Among the critics were Gias Uddin Selim, Farooque,<sup>[50]</sup> Mahmud Didar and Khijir Hayat Khan. Nasiruddin Yousuff thinks that it would have been better if the director of the film was Bangladeshi.<sup>[59]</sup> Abul Hayat and Toukir Ahmed were positive in this regard. However, Shyam Benegal pointed out that the biopic of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Indian nation, was made by a foreigner.<sup>[81]</sup> On the other hand, Kaushik Ganguly thinks it is a simple matter because Bangabandhu is like Kazi Nazrul Islam who is the wealth of both India and Bangladesh.<sup>[m][61]</sup> According to Syed Borhan Kabir, Benegal was a talented director in his early life but it is not possible for him to give any good films in this era.<sup>[117]</sup>



Shyam Benegal, one of three Indian directors proposed to film committee.

## Casting

Although Jannatul Sumaiya Heme's name was on the list published by BFDC, the director did not include her name on his own list. She complained that her name should not have been excluded without informing. However, Mohammad Hossain Jaimy, the line producer of the film, claimed that he did not call her because Heme's name was not in the final list given to him.<sup>[84]</sup> Jyotika Jyoti complained on social media that although she was selected for acting twice, she was dropped due to corruption in the Bangladesh part of the production team. Jyotika Jyoti also said that when he contacted Shyam Benegal to find out why he was dropped, he informed her that since he was told that she was busy with other work, he dropped her.<sup>[83]</sup> After the release of the trailer of the film, Shuvoo received negative response. The trailer captured his weak performance which the people of Bangladesh could not accept. As a reaction of Shuvoo's excuse for the trailer, Sohana Saba trolled him on Facebook about his performance.<sup>[118]</sup> Columnist Deepak Chowdhury

criticised the casting of Shuvoo and Tisha in the film.<sup>[119]</sup> Columnist Syed Borhan Kabir criticized casting process of the film. In particular, he criticised Arifin Shuvoo and considered him to be only suitable for acting in romantic films.<sup>[117]</sup>

## First trailer

After the upload of the film's first trailer, it got mixed reaction among the people.<sup>[120]</sup> The trailer was criticised for many issues. Hashibur Reza Kallol, a filmmaker, criticised the trailer.<sup>[121]</sup> But Kingshuk Chatterjee, a history professor from the University of Calcutta, hinted that it is normal because even *Gandhi* and *Jinnah* could not escape criticism.<sup>[89]</sup> Contrary to criticism of the trailer, director Shyam Benegal said that it is inappropriate to react only by watching the trailer without watching the entire film.<sup>[122]</sup> Sohanur Rahman Sohan supported him.<sup>[123]</sup> A section of viewers complained that there were many historical mistakes in the trailer. Scriptwriter Sadhana Ahmed refuted the allegations and told *The Daily Star* that there was no danger of a historical mistake in the film.<sup>[13]</sup> Columnist Deepak Chowdhury thinks that if people watch this trailer, they may lose interest in watching the film.<sup>[119]</sup> Bahauddin Khelon, one of the casting directors of the film, agreed that the trailer has some problem.<sup>[107]</sup>

When people in Bangladesh criticized the trailer of Mujib, Arifin Shuvoo said that the trailer is not official. However, the country's Information Minister Hasan Mahmud denied it on May 25 and confirmed about its officiality.<sup>[124]</sup> The director said in an interview on May 26 that the trailer was made before the film's production was completed and another trailer will be released later. He also wanted to make it clear that he is more interested in calling it a teaser than a movie trailer. He also indirectly acknowledged the flaws in the trailer.<sup>[125]</sup>


## Politics


Jawad Antu of *Somoy TV* thinks that since Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the idol of *Bangladesh Awami League*, a group of people in Bangladesh have unreasonably criticized its trailer, thinking it is a propaganda film of the political party.<sup>[126]</sup> According to Deep Halder of *ThePrint*, Sheikh Hasina released the hastily produced film to impress the citizens for the 2024 Bangladeshi general election which will not actually help her in politics.<sup>[127]</sup>

## Historicity

Film personality Mir Shamsul Alam Babu pointed that while the second trailer showed the present Arts faculty building of *Dhaka University*, it was in the area of *Dhaka Medical College Hospital* in 1947. He found discrepancies between the scenes of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's return to his homeland in 1972 shown in the film with the historical account. Although Bangabandhu's residence had only two rooms in 1961, the

### External videos

 **YouTube** First trailer video for Mujib: The Making of a Nation

 Mujib - The Making of a Nation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=givLtqsybMo>)

trailer shows Mujib's family entering the entire two-story building. In the trailer, the scene of students being shot in front of Dhaka University's arts faculty during the Bengali language movement on 21 February 1952, but according to history, the shooting did not happen then, but happened hours later.<sup>[128]</sup>

## Release

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### Marketing

On 19 May 2022, the trailer for the film was shown at the pavilion reserved for India in Cannes Film Festival.<sup>[129]</sup> Viewers in the pavilion praised the film.<sup>[130]</sup> A week before the film's release in Bangladesh, the music video of its only original song was released on YouTube. The audience appreciated the song.<sup>[131]</sup> A folk song used in the film was then uploaded online.<sup>[132]</sup> Its lead actor Arifin Shuvoo visited Gulshan on 9 October 2023 to promote the film.<sup>[133]</sup> The day before the film's release in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Chhatra League announced that it would take over the promotion of the film in the country.<sup>[134]</sup> At the same time, the film continued to be promoted in India before its release.<sup>[135]</sup>



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### Screening

A screening of the film was organized by Bangladesh Chhatra League on 19 October 2023 at Jagannath University in the presence of Md. Imdadul Hoque, vice chancellor of the university.<sup>[136]</sup> A public screening of the film was organized at government auditorium in Barura Upazila, Comilla district for a day at the initiative of Bangladesh Awami League on 20 October 2023.<sup>[137]</sup> Another public screening of the film was organized at Modhuban Cineplex in Bogra district for a week at the party initiative from the same day.<sup>[138]</sup>

### Theatrical release

This Bengali film was planned to be dubbed in English and Hindi.<sup>[139]</sup> Its original release date was 17 March 2020.<sup>[74]</sup> Then keeping the day and month fixed, the year of its release is set back by 1 year and 2 years respectively, but was later postponed.<sup>[140][102]</sup> On May 3, 2022, it was forecasted by National Film Development Corporation of India that the film would be released in September of the same year,<sup>[141]</sup> but postponed due to the trailer controversy.<sup>[59]</sup>

In September 6, during Sheikh Hasina's four-day state visit to India, Arindam Bagchi, the spokesperson of Indian Ministry of External Affairs, said that the film's release date has not been set but he expects it to be released by the end of 2022.<sup>[142]</sup> On 31 July 2023, Bangladesh Film Censor Board gave uncut censor certificate to the film.<sup>[143]</sup> On 20 September 2023, Hasan Mahmud said that the government is planning to release the film in the month of October in the country.<sup>[144]</sup>

On 30 September 2023, it was confirmed from the National Film Development Corporation of India that it will release in India on 27 October 2023.<sup>[145]</sup> On the first day of October, it was known that the film will release in Bangladesh in 13th of the same month.<sup>[146]</sup> Jaaz Multimedia became the nationwide distributor of the film and revealed that it will be released in 153 cinemas in the country.<sup>[147]</sup> The film premiered on 12

October 2023 at the [Bangladesh Film Archive](#).<sup>[148]</sup> The next day the film was released in the movie theaters of Bangladesh.<sup>[149]</sup> In 16 October, the number of movie theaters showing the film increased to 161.<sup>[150]</sup> As of 20 October 2023, the film was showing in 164 movie theaters in Bangladesh.<sup>[151]</sup>

## Reception

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### Audiences

The film received a roaring response at box office on its opening in Bangladesh.<sup>[152]</sup> 97% movie theaters in Bangladesh were house full on the first day of the film's release.<sup>[150]</sup> According to a report published by *The Business Post*, the audience feedback about the film at [Star Cineplex](#) on the first day of its release was positive.<sup>[153]</sup> According to a news article of *Kaler Kantho* published on 15 October 2023, movie theaters in urban Dhaka were satisfied with the audience numbers of the film, but [Lion Cinemas](#) showed the opposite.<sup>[154]</sup> In addition to the city, the film also received great interest from the audience in the rural areas of Bangladesh.<sup>[155]</sup> According to the report of *Dhaka Times*, most of the movie theaters were houseful on the first two days of the film's release and the next three days saw a fair number of viewers.<sup>[156]</sup>

### Critical reception

According to film personalities and critics, the film has some flaws and shortcomings but they have praised the film.<sup>[157]</sup> According to Rajib Kanti Roy of *Daily Sun*, it is a film worth watching, if not extraordinary. He praised its screenplay, background music, soundtracks and actors' performances, but criticized the VFX and make-up used for the actors. According to him, the film uses some historical footage that make it an incomplete feature film. According to him, Nusrat Faria and Riaz have failed to portray the characters of Sheikh Hasina and Tajuddin Ahmed. He also called the child actor who played the role of [Sheikh Russel](#) unsuitable for the role.<sup>[158]</sup>

### Lawsuit

On 19 October 2023, Kaiser Kamal, Legal Affairs Secretary of [Bangladesh Nationalist Party](#) sent a legal notice to the court, accusing people associated with the film, including the director, of defaming former president [Ziaur Rahman](#) and [his wife](#) by showing historically incorrect information in two scenes of the film, seeking to stop its screening. The notice also asked the accused to apologize to the nation by removing the scenes from the film.<sup>[159]</sup>

## Awards

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Award	Category	Recipients	Result	Ref(s)
<a href="#">Dhaka International Film Festival</a>	Audience Award	Nuzhat Yasmin	Won	<sup>[160]</sup>

## See also

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- [List of artistic depictions of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](#)
- [Cinema of Bangladesh](#)
- [Indo-Bangladesh joint production](#)

- List of historical films set in Asia

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### Notes

- a. Around US\$0.012 as of June 2021<sup>[6]</sup>
- b. No feature film about Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been released before 2021. In 2021, two films were released about him titled Tungiparar Miya Bhai and Chironjeeb Mujib.<sup>[16]</sup>
- c. Other two directors were Goutam Ghose and Kaushik Ganguly.<sup>[61]</sup>
- d. Columnist Rahman Chowdhury claimed to have met Shyam Benegal in October 2015 and learned that he was then engaged in pre-production of a film based on the Indian independence movement.<sup>[63]</sup>
- e. Around US\$0.996 million as of June 2021<sup>[6]</sup>
- f. Shyam Benegal wanted the language of the film to be Bengali as he thought that making the film in another language would disrespect the Bengali language movement.
- g. It was for linguistic reason. India and Bangladesh has different Bengali dialects that are historically important.<sup>[70]</sup>
- h. In Dhaka (Television Building), Kolkata and Mumbai.
  - i. Some of their names with role are given in Cast.
  - j. During the 2019 Indian general election, Ahmed visited West Bengal, India and joined an election campaign. That was against the law of the country and that was the reason for visa related issue.<sup>[90]</sup>
  - k. In Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata.<sup>[4][96]</sup>
    - l. The places are Dhaka, Gazipur District and Gopalganj District.<sup>[1][100][101][102]</sup>
  - m. Kazi Nazrul Islam is the national poet of Bangladesh who born in India, a neighboring country of Bangladesh.

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## External links

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- *Mujib: The Making of a Nation* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14407884/>) at [IMDb](#)

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