



A snippet from last year's Cannes Film Festival



Amitabh Reza Chowdhury



Ashfaque Nipun



Adnan Al Rajeev

## Noted filmmakers on Bangladesh's 'Rehana Maryam Noor' making it to Cannes

SHARMIN JOYA

Director Abdullah Mohammad Saad's second feature film "Rehana Maryam Noor" has been officially selected in the *Un Certain Regard* section of the 74th Cannes Film Festival.

Written and edited by Saad, this is the first Bangladeshi film to have been officially selected at the prestigious festival. Previously, the late director Tareque Masud's "Matir Moyna" was screened at the Director's Fortnight segment of the 55th Cannes.

The premise of Saad's film revolves around a college teacher, Rehana, who single-handedly wages a fight for justice on behalf of her daughter and one of her students. Rajib Mohajan, Sydul Haque Khandaker, Adnan Habib co-produced the movie.



Abdullah Mohammad Saad

"Rehana Maryam Noor" was also invited to the Cannes Film Festival in 2020.

However, since last year's festival was held virtually without any categories, the film's team decided to back out.

"When we submitted the film for a second time at Cannes, we followed all the procedures yet again. It is very rare for one film to be selected twice for such a prestigious festival," says Rajib Mohajan.

Berlin-based sales agent Films Boutique will represent worldwide rights for "Rehana Maryam Noor".

On June 3, the Official Selection of the 74th Festival de Cannes was presented by Pierre Lescure and Thierry Frémaux at the UGC Normandie in Paris.

The news quickly started making rounds on social media. People did not shy away from singing praises of the film's crew and cast members. Noted directors shared their



A snippet from Rehana Maryam Noor

thoughts on this historic achievement for Bangladesh, with us.

"I have known Saad from the time that he was assisting filmmaker Wahid Tarek," shares Amitabh Reza Chowdhury. "He is a hardworking and dedicated man. He

was also initially involved with my film, 'Rickshaw Girl'. That is when I saw him working closely. He is one of my favourite directors."

Khelna Chobi's internationally acclaimed film "Live from Dhaka" (2016)

was Saad's directorial debut, which won the Best Actor and Best Director awards at the Singapore International Film Festival and has been screened at various international film festivals around the world.

"I am not personally acquainted with Saad, but I am proud of him. I watched his film, 'Live from Dhaka', and found his style to be unique. He is meant for a global audience," says director Adnan Al Rajeev.

Noted director Ashfaque Nipun is proud of the facts that Saad and him are from Chittagong, and both of them came to Dhaka to make films. "Saad has proved that we do not need to have years of experience for a tremendous achievement. While many Bangladeshi films are being held back by policymakers and various other obstacles, Saad got this breakthrough at such a young age," he adds. "I am also happy that my friend, Kazi Sami Hasan, is a part of this film."

"Rehana Maryam Noor" has an ensemble cast of Azmeri Haque Badhon, Afia Tabassum Borno, Afia Zahin, Kazi Sami Hasan, and Tuhin Tajimul, among others.

## EMK Center's virtual exhibition 'Connect with Nature' addresses climate crisis

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Marking World Environment Day, EMK Center kicked off a virtual exhibition, "Connect with Nature", from June 5, showcasing works by prominent artists and photographers.



The exhibition explores the adverse effects of climate change. "Climate Refugees in Bangladesh" is a photography series by Abir Abdullah. The works on display portray the plight of people who were displaced due to flooding and river erosion, which are the primary indicators of global warming. "People in the coastal areas suffer both temporary and long-term displacement

every year. My series aims to intensively document the stories of the coastal population and the tales of their hardships," Abir shared.

Mohammad Rakibul Hasan's "Park Life" is another photo series that depicts the effects of urbanisation on the capital's environment. It focuses on the importance of decentralising Dhaka and increasing the number of green spots to

amplify the city's living standards. "The fate of the existence of vegetation and natural water reservoirs is determined by powerful people. The flora of Dhaka is threatened by desperate urbanisation and industrialisation," Rakibul added.

The other works on display include "Masai", a painting series by Louis Nuyens. The Masai communities, inhabiting East Africa, form a part of a semi-nomadic tribe who are on the verge of cultural extinction. Dry seasons and droughts accelerated by climate change have made their traditional livelihood of cattle-herding difficult, as the animals are starving. Through his work, Louis brilliantly attempts to illustrate the lives of these tribes.

"Aab-E-Hayat" is a photography series by Shehab Rahmanian revolving around the cycle of water and the spontaneous patterns it creates along the way. "As a climate activist, I have been observing natural cycles for the past few years. This series is a part of the documentation of my journey of observations," he added.

The exhibition is open for viewers on EMK Center's website till June 30, 2021.

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Artworks from the exhibition

## A chat with LOVELY DEB



PHOTO: COURTESY

SADIA TAHSIN

Growing up in a musical family based in Sylhet, Lovely Deb was prompted to persuade music from a very early age. Events such as *Mongola* and *Nagarkirtan* acted as a motivational force for her, more so because Lovely's father realised her potential and inspired her.

"My initial journey began in a musical institute named Surbitan, under the guidance of *ustad* Babar Ali Khan, who was also the master of eminent singer, Subir Nandi", shared Lovely, who won a national award from Shishu Academy as a child artist. The achievement acted as an intense motivator for her, opening a gateway into Bangladesh's music industry, *loko geeti* being her principal choice.

The Covid-19 pandemic constructed setbacks for artistes across all industries, with music being no exception. "Mental health plays a crucial role for artists to explore their creativity and alongside hampering their livelihoods, pandemic had ceased everything that singers yearn for: stage performances, live interactions and tours to name a few," remarked Lovely. "A digital platform created solely for artists, which provides them with basic honorarium, could at least keep our country's cultural framework dynamic", she added.

"*Noya Daman*, which is a trending Sylheti song, was first recorded in 1973 at Sylhet *Betar* by singer Iyarunessa Khanom, and I re-recorded it in the mid-90s for a wedding album named *Emon Moja Hoyna*. In 2003, architect Shakur Majid used this song in one of his telefilms, *Boirattie*", she shared. Appreciating the new remake of the song, she asserted, "As long as the integrity of the lyrics and music of a certain song is upheld, remakes are fine. However, remixes or discrediting the originality of the song is unseemly."

On account of the hundredth birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Lovely plans on singing and releasing over a hundred Sylheti songs. The talented singer is also working on a special project, associated with the Sylheti *Dhamail* performances.