

Meet Rawyan Shayema, the first Bangladeshi to get into AFI

The AFI has nurtured almost 30 Oscar winners, and 149 nominees. "I will be carrying the flag of my country as the first Bangladeshi woman to be accepted into the AFI. As part of my studio courses, I will be working under renowned Hollywood filmmakers," says an excited Rawyan Shayema, who is an inspiration for all women who work in unconventional sectors.

AISHWARYA RAIHAN MEGHA

How often do we hear about Bangladeshi women in cinematography? In a field that is traditionally male dominated, Rawyan Shayema is on a journey to become a recognised name in films. In the American Film Institute (AFI), less than one percent of applications are accepted each year, and Rawyan is the first ever Bangladeshi to be accepted into the prestigious institute.

Rawyan, hailing from the suburbs of Rajshahi, was always fascinated by fiction. Losing her mother during her teenage years and being raised by her father in Dinajpur, Rawyan started developing an affinity towards films and cinematography.

"I love to read, and grew up in an environment that strengthened my bond with books, thanks to my father," she said to The Daily Star. "After I had passed HSC, I got accepted to a public dental college." However, Rawyan knew that her heart lay elsewhere. Over the years, her love for films pulled her towards cinematography.

The artiste convinced her father about her passion, and decided to pursue a degree in Film and Media at Stamford University in 2011. "Yes, directing is cool, writing stories is fun, but cinematography contains a massive realm of creativity which I dreamed about exploring," she said.

"The first things we notice in any film or show are the acting, and the flow of the story, conducted by the camera. The mood of the story directs the camera movement, framing, and lighting. Thus, I always attempt to capture the spirit of a story and let it guide my framing."

Rawyan has worked as a cinematographer, editor, and a sound designer. She started her journey with two experimental short films -- "Story of a Couple" and "Trap of Circle" in 2011, the first year of her undergrad.

"Till now, I have shot over 20 fiction projects, and in 80 percent of them, I did not get paid," says a disgruntled Rawyan. The artiste received the Best Cinematographer award at the Stamford University Film Fest for "Burning Dust", directed by Saiful Islam Niloy in 2014, which further ignited my passion.

She has also been awarded by Dhaka Doc Lab, DocSkool Nepal, Docedge Kolkata. Her films have been featured in the Rotterdam Film Festival in the Netherlands, and Film South Asia Nepal.

"Being a woman in cinematography is difficult, particularly due to gender bias, social norms, and the lack of established female cinematographers in the

fiction sector," she says. "It's disheartening when you see most women eventually shifting to other professions. I decided to make my own way and applied for an MFA in Cinematography to four prestigious colleges overseas and got accepted to all of them. I chose the American Film Institute as it's ranked as the number one film school in the world."

Even though the AFI provides a USD 20,000 partial scholarship, it is a herculean task to manage the remaining amount. That is why, Rawyan is raising funds via GoFundMe for the rest of her tuition and expenses.

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"I want to come back and pass on my learning to the next generation of cinematographers in Bangladesh."



PHOTOS: TAKEN FROM FACEBOOK



Pori and Razz name son Rajya

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Pori Moni and Sariful Razz were blessed with a baby boy at Evercare hospital around 6:40 pm on Thursday.

Razz had confirmed the news to The Daily Star. The couple are now experiencing parental bliss, and are going through 'the best times of their lives'.

Yesterday, Pori posted a much-anticipated picture with her cute baby boy. "Shaheem Muhammad Rajya, you be a conveyor of light for the world," read her post.

Nora Fatehi coming to Dhaka

Conquering Bollywood with her performances in "Saki Saki", "Dilbar" and many other songs, Nora Fatehi is coming to Dhaka to perform in a prize-giving ceremony.



Nora, who has appeared in Hindi, Telegu, Malayalam and many other industries, will come to Dhaka mid-December, as per sources.

The artiste, besides starring in music videos, has also become popular through her presence in reality shows "Bigg Boss", "Jhalak Dikhla Ja", "Comedy Night" and "MTV Troll Police".

Let us have a look at the nominations for Best Actor (Male) this year



Ispahani Tea Limited and The Daily Star have come together to reward the best in OTT and Digital Media this year. Nominations for Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2021 have been announced, and this is your opportunity to reward your favourite artistes for their performances on OTT and digital platforms.

To vote, visit

ottdcawards.thedailystar.net

Scan to vote



A collaboration of



Chanchal Chowdhury

The National Film Award winning actor has been nominated for his impeccable performance in the Syed Ahmed Shawki directorial web series "Taqdeer". Known for his versatility, Chanchal plays the role of a freezer van driver, whose world turns upside down when he discovers a dead body in his van. This production garnered much appreciation among the fans, bringing about widespread acclaim for the actor for his performance in the lead role.



Fazlur Rahman Babu

The indomitable Fazlur Rahman Babu has been nominated for commendable portrayal of Firoz Khan in the Raihan Rafi directorial web film, "Khachar Bhitro Ochin Pakhi". His rugged clothes and worn-out face only made his presence in the film more believable. While the audience appreciated his performance wholeheartedly, the critics also lauded his effort for this production.



Intekhab Dinar

Captivating the audience with his naturalistic screen presence, Intekhab Dinar has made it to the nominations for playing the character of Mostak Ahmed beautifully in "Dwikhandito", a chapter from Robiul Alam Robi's anthology series "Unoloukik". The parapsychological thriller takes the audience to a ride full of riddles that end in unexplainable conclusions.



Manoj Kumar Pramanik

Manoj Kumar Pramanik has been nominated this year for his performance in Nurul Alam Atique's web fiction "Nishiddho Basor", an episode from the anthology series "Bagh Bondi Shingho Bondi". Taking little steps at a time, Manoj has slowly made his presence felt on OTT platforms. Through his diverse character choices, he has grown to become a popular face among the viewers.



Siam Ahmed

Siam Ahmed's transition from the silver-screen to the streaming platforms is praiseworthy. Bagging the nomination for his performance in Shihab Shaheen's web series "Morichika", Siam stunningly essayed the role of a police officer on the hunt to catch a political thug.

Voting Process

Go to the following website: ottdcawards.thedailystar.net and then select the "sign up" option. After signing up with your name, phone number and password, an OTP code will be sent to your mobile for verification. After verification, you then need to select the category you want to vote for. A person can cast a maximum of one vote in each category from an account. August 20, 2022, is the last day for voting.

Randomly selected **50 lucky voters** will get the opportunity to attend the glamorous gala event.