



Bangladesh is lagging behind in female-led projects: SADIA KHALID REETI

MAHIYA TABASSUM

From penning screenplays to critiquing global cinema, meet Sadia Khalid Reeti—who has navigated the complexities of a male-dominated industry with grace and determination. A multi-faceted talent, Reeti wears the hats of film critic, screenwriter, and journalist with equal aplomb, bringing a fresh perspective to an industry often set in its way.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Reeti has also secured her place on the Golden Globes voting panel for an impressive third consecutive year. Her sharp critical eye and deep understanding of cinema have earned her respect in film circles around the globe.

You've recently returned from the Cannes Film Festival as a jury member. How would you describe your experience? It was exhilarating. My second time at Cannes, I was thrilled by the increased Bangladeshi representation, with co-producers Adnan Al Rajeev and Tanveer Hossain present. The festival buzz and interactions with global filmmakers were incredible, showing Bangladesh's growing mark on this prestigious platform.

Congratulations on your third nomination to the Golden Globes voting panel. What's your approach to evaluating films for such a prestigious award? Thank you! It's an honour and a massive responsibility. The process is incredibly demanding – we're talking about potentially watching over 1,000 hours of content. I've learned to be efficient, dropping projects that don't meet the mark early on. It's about balancing quantity with quality of assessment. Given my background, I pay special attention to the screenplay but I strive to consider all aspects – cinematography, direction, acting – to give a holistic evaluation.

How do you maintain objectivity in your critiques when you have personal preferences as an audience? It's a delicate balance. Previously, film critics

avoided other industry roles to prevent conflicts of interest, but this is changing. Personal tastes inevitably play a role – I prefer fantasy and horror and usually avoid the crime genre. But as a critic, it's crucial to step back and evaluate each work on its own merits. I believe in specialised criticism; experts in cinematography, for instance, can offer deeper insights. If critics evaluate films based on their expertise, we can elevate and diversify the role of film critics.

We cannot survive wearing only one hat in the evolving media landscape; we must wear multiple hats. The key is acknowledging our biases while striving for a comprehensive assessment.

You've worked with major Hollywood studios. Any standout experiences?

The relentless pace in Hollywood makes it hard to dwell on any single project. I'd say working on *To the Bone* was a highlight. It's currently on Netflix, starring Keanu Reeves. Interestingly, my least favourite project also starred Reeves – *Siberia*, which I haven't brought myself to watch yet.

Bangladesh's OTT platforms are buzzing with content, but there seems to be a lack of diversity in storytelling. What's your take on the current state of Bangladeshi cinema?

Frankly, we're stuck in a rut of caution, too afraid to explore new territories. The capital-

intensive nature of filmmaking and limited resources make filmmakers hesitant to break from established trends, sticking to proven formulas instead of risking innovation.

What we desperately need is more comprehensive market research to understand audience preferences and demands. Until we're willing to take calculated risks, we'll struggle to bring fresh perspectives to our cinema.

How do you view the representation of women in Bangladeshi cinema, both on-screen and behind the scenes?

It's a complex issue. Globally, there's a rise in female-led projects, but Bangladesh is lagging. Even acclaimed films like *Rehana Maryam Noor* sometimes receive underwhelming audience reception. Ironically, films with misogynistic themes often perform better, even with female viewers. It's disheartening, but producing quality, progressive content may gradually shift audience preferences.

What advice would you give to aspiring filmmakers and critics in Bangladesh?

Do your research. Analyse films, understand the grammar of screenwriting, and then make it your own. No one's born a genius – it takes consistent hard work, expert feedback, and constructive criticism to improve. Remember, cinema is for the audience. And please, avoid shortcuts.



Parambrata calls Pori Moni a 'powerhouse of talent'

Indian actor Parambrata Chattopadhyay's full-length film *Ajob Karkhana* is set to release in Bangladeshi theatres on July 12. During a recent



visit to Dhaka to promote the film, he expressed admiration for Bangladeshi artistes, including Mosharraf Karim and Chanchal Chowdhury.

However, he showered praise on the *Bishwoshundori* actress Pori Moni as he believes her to be one powerful artiste. "I think Pori Moni is a 'powerhouse of talent'. If she utilises her skills properly in films, she could do very well," said the actor.

Parambrata also spoke about his admiration for Afran Nisho and Apurba's performances. He has also seen Tasnia Farin's work and believes that as a budding artiste, she is doing really well.

Arifin Shuvoo to lead in Indian web-series



Jubilee famed director Soumik Sen is on his way to showcase the story of Bangladesh's Liberation War in his upcoming web-series.

According to several sources, Arifin Shuvoo and Sauraseni Maitra will be seen in the lead roles. The still-untitled project will be in Hindi, and reportedly, Arpita Chatterjee will be the producer. The series will stream on OTT platform Sony Liv.

Rumour has it that the first draft of the script is done, and the initial conversations with the two actors have also been completed. If all goes well, shooting will commence soon.

NEWS

What steps

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as a public interest litigation based on a report published on The Daily Star on June 2 headlined "Jobs in Malaysia: Mismanagement left over 3k workers with no ticket to KL".

According to the report, Mismanagement by government authorities and local recruiting agents led to over 3,000 workers failing to reach Malaysia before the deadline of May 31.

Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) initially estimated that 3,000 to 4,000 Bangladeshi workers could not reach the Southeast Asian country within the deadline, set by Kuala Lumpur in early March.

On May 31, several hundred workers waited for hours at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to catch flights. Many of them went there without tickets after receiving assurances from local recruiters that they would be given tickets on time, the report added.

NBR official

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and immovable properties of Faisal. The court also ordered the confiscation of all properties of his wife Afsana Jasmin and some owned by his relatives in connection with graft allegations brought against them.

The court order came after the Anti-Corruption Commission submitted documents to the court on Thursday after its preliminary investigation.

The judge subsequently ordered ACC to freeze 87 bank accounts belonging to Faisal, his wife, and relatives.

Corrupt officials

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"Corrupt politicians collude with corrupt officials. They cannot do it without the support of the government officials," the former bureaucrat said.

"The ill gotten money does not stay in the country. It is laundered abroad. This cannot go on because it is harming the national interest," he added.

Asked if he would place a bill to amend the laws governing government officials and employees, he said he would work towards this with other MPs.

Latifur Rahman's 4th death anniv today

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terrorists during the July 1 attack at the Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan in 2016.

Latifur was the founding director of Mediaworld, the company that owns The Daily Star, and chairman of Mediastar, the owning company of Prothom Alo. The newspapers are the leading English and Bangla dailies in the country.

A respected figure in the global business community, he single-handedly built one of the biggest business conglomerates in the country with his hard work, perseverance, and entrepreneurial skills.

Born in Jalpaiguri on August 28, 1945, he began his education at St Francis School and then went to St Edmund's School, Shillong, in 1956. He also studied at St Xavier's College in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

After coming to Dhaka, he started as a trainee at his family-owned jute mills – W Rahman Jute Mills in Chandpur – in 1966. The jute

mill was the first to be owned by a Bangalee in the erstwhile East Pakistan.

He became an executive and worked there until 1971. But the government nationalised industries in 1972 and Latifur found himself in a very difficult situation. The family also owned some tea estates in north-eastern Bangladesh but after the independence the price of produce was less than production cost.

But he did not give up hope. The same year, Latifur came across a Swiss company and started a trading business. There was no looking back after that.

He established the Transcom Group in 1981. It is now one of the country's largest conglomerates, with operations in the areas of manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, electronics, beverages, media, consumer, food, and insurance.

Latifur was a member of executive board of ICC-Paris, VP of ICC-Bangladesh and member

of Brac's governing body. He was a member of the Bangladesh Better Business Forum and Advisory Committee on World Trade Organisation.

He was also president of the MCCI, Dhaka for seven terms and of Bangladesh Employers' Federation.

Latifur was also chairman of the Bangladesh government's Trade Body Reforms Committee and a member of Bangladesh Bank's executive board.

The business icon was an honouree of "Oslo Business for Peace Award 2012" and was awarded Business Executive of the Year 2001 by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh. He was also honoured with the "Saarc Outstanding Leader" award and Lifetime Achievement Award.

Latifur Rahman married Shahnaz Rahman. They have three daughters Simeen Hossain, Shahzreh Huq, (late) Shazneen Rahman and son (late) Arshad Waliur Rahman.

Teachers go on work abstention indefinitely

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Following the briefing, DU authorities, in a notice yesterday, announced the suspension of all exams until further notice citing "unavoidable circumstances".

As part of the work abstention programme, protesting teachers at their respective universities will observe an hour-long sit-in every afternoon to speak to the media and provide updates about the programme.

They had earlier threatened the action in case the government did not meet the demand.

Now, teachers in all 35 public universities, including Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, and Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, said they will join the work abstention programme starting today.

"The decision to implement the new pension scheme was taken without first discussing it with us – the teachers who are the primary stakeholders. This is discriminatory and unacceptable," said Prof Zeenat Huda, general secretary of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association.

Prof Habibur Rahman, president of the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association, said, "Our demand is based on the fact that those who join as teachers in July will face problems in the future. We've clarified our stance by holding a press conference during the movement. But the government did not respond to our demands."

Earlier, FBUTA, citing a recently published gazette, said teachers who will be appointed in public universities from July 1 will fall under the new pension scheme instead of the current pension facilities offered by the universities.

They fear that many meritorious

students will not join the teaching profession if the new scheme, which they termed "discriminatory", is implemented.

They have been demanding the cancellation of the gazette in this regard through several peaceful protests since May 26.

Speaking on the issue, Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury said the ministry could not make any decisions on the Universal Pension Scheme as it is a matter of government policy and falls outside the ministry's jurisdiction.

"We cannot comment for or against a government policy. This policy applies to all autonomous institutions, not just universities," he told reporters at the International Mother Language Institute.

The minister, however, said that they are aware of the ongoing movement of the university teachers and that a dialogue is ongoing with the protesters to resolve the issue.

Bellingham, Kane

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Gareth Southgate's reign as England boss.

Kane then headed in just a minute into extra-time to set up a quarter-final meeting with Switzerland on Saturday.

"That's the desire and the attitude from the boys. It looked tough for a second there but you keep going... Jude does what Jude does and what an unbelievable goal," Kane said.

Southgate looked certain to fall on his sword after steadfastly refusing to make changes to a side that stumbled through as winners of Group C despite scoring just two goals in three games.

Kobbie Mainoo was introduced for his first competitive start in Southgate's only change and he paid the price with another lacklustre display lacking in any speed or invention for long spells.

The one saving grace of England's performances in the group stage was that a makeshift defence had held up well, conceding just once in three games.

However, they were torn to pieces early on by a Slovakia side ranked 45th in the world.

England did not heed a couple of warnings as David Hanco and Lukas Haraslin were wasteful with big chances.

Slovakia finally punished their more illustrious opponents when David Strelec was given acres of room to turn and play in Schranz, who confidently stroked past Jordan Pickford for his third goal of the tournament.

Despite his lack of experience,

Mainoo was one of the few players who threatened to spark England into life as the Manchester United midfielder's effort was deflected wide.

The half-time whistle was met with a chorus of boos but Southgate still stuck to his guns and did not make a change until 25 minutes to go.

England did at least improve on a dismal first half and had the ball in the net within five minutes of the restart.

Phil Foden turned in Kieran Trippier's cross but was caught offside after a VAR review.

Slovakia should have doubled their lead shortly afterwards when England gave away possession and Strelec saw Pickford well off his line but failed to hit the target from the halfway line.

Southgate's hand was finally forced on 66 minutes by an injury to Trippier.

With Luke Shaw not match-fit, Bukayo Saka was forced to deputise at left-back to make room for the introduction of Cole Palmer.

England's chances seemed to have gone when Kane headed wide a golden opportunity and Declan Rice smashed the post with a long-range pot shot.

However, there was an incredible twist as Bellingham acrobatically turned home Guehi's flick-on from a throw-in in the final moments of added-on time.

Kane hailed the goal as "one of the best in our country's history, I reckon".

The Brentford striker headed Eberechi Eze's mishit shot back across goal for Kane to power home his second goal of the tournament.

French far right wins

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The final turnout in 2022 was just 47.5 percent.

The July 7 second round will see run-off votes take place in seats where there was no absolute majority, allowing the final composition of the National Assembly to take shape.

With Russia's war against Ukraine in its third year and energy and food prices much higher, support for the anti-immigration and eurosceptic RN party has surged despite Macron's pledges to prevent its ascent.

The two-round vote could put the

far-right in power in France for the first time since the Nazi occupation in World War II and give 28-year-old RN party chief Jordan Bardella, a protégé of its longtime leader Marine Le Pen, the chance to form a government.

This would create a tense period of "cohabitation" with Macron, who has vowed to serve out his term until 2027. Bardella has said he will only form a government if the RN wins an absolute majority in the elections.

In the southern city of Marseille, Nabil Agueni said he had skipped the European elections but voted on yesterday.