

SY HUQ

Bangladeshi origin producer making it big in Japan

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RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Sy Huq, a young filmmaker, has become the first Bangladeshi-American creative executive in Japan's anime industry. He secured a prestigious role at D'ART Shtajio, Japan's first Black-owned anime studio, and boasts a reputation as a four-time Oscar-qualified director and producer. Intrigued by his backstory and what inspired him to pursue filmmaking, I wanted to learn more about his journey.

A traveler at heart and filmmaker by passion, he discovered his love for Japanese films at a young age. He frequented public libraries to watch VHS tapes, drawing inspiration from Kurosawa's live-action movies and Hayao Miyazaki's animations. His imagination and creativity were further fueled by writing and drawing comics.

"Production was never something I thought was within reach for someone like me, especially at the Hollywood level. While backpacking overseas, I realised the profound impact and community-building power of bringing people



together through storytelling. After completing my first few screenplays during my travels and receiving positive feedback from those around me, I sensed it was time to take a leap forward. I decided to immerse myself in Hollywood, learn the film business through UCLA's Professionals Program in Producing, and approach production with dedication," said Sy.

Recently, Animation Magazine announced Sy Huq's new role at D'ART Shtajio, known for their



work on notable animated projects such as *Star Wars: Visions – The Pit*, *The Boys Presents: Diabolical*, and *The Weeknd-Snowchild* (Animated video).

Their collaboration was destined. While immersed in various creative anime projects in Tokyo, Sy began collaborating with D'ART Shtajio on several ventures.

"It was during these collaborations, especially with D'ART Shtajio's incredibly talented CEO, Arthell Isom, that we realised not only our natural inclination to collaborate and enjoy the process of developing and structuring stories that innovate and challenge the anime industry, but it was also our potential to create something truly remarkable. It was this realisation that led to discussions with D'ART about joining as lead



executive producer. At D'ART Shtajio, I will focus on developing, creating, and writing large-scale anime projects, expanding their portfolio to impact animation enthusiasts worldwide with our unique storytelling style that blends Eastern and Western influences," shared the young producer.

While he has roots in Bangladesh, he has not had much exposure to the Bangladeshi animation industry. He is eager to learn more about it from industry professionals in the country to deepen his understanding of its production.

"There is a project I've been creating and developing since I filmed the primary story in documentary form in Bangladesh in 2022, based on my father's experiences during the Liberation War as a child in 1971, in the countryside. It's been an exciting journey, gaining attention within my trusted circles. We're taking our time to ensure the project is as impactful as possible while allowing it to creatively evolve. I look forward to seeing it come to life to represent the beauty of Bangladesh, frame by frame, in the future," said Sy.

An anime enthusiast, he is also a four-time Oscar-qualified director and producer. His debut as a director, *Things That Fall*, was eligible for the 92nd Academy Awards for Best Live Action Short Film. He served as executive producer for *The Boys:Diabolical*, which qualified for the 94th Academy Awards in the same category. Sy also produced two short films, *The Stranger* and

Panorama, both qualifying for the 95th Academy Awards for Best Live Action Short Film.

Sy Huq, despite his films earning critical acclaim and festival awards, encountered challenges while directing his debut film *Things That Fall*. The project faced setbacks twice before coming to fruition.

"Through that film, I learned the power of empathy and the importance of championing meaningful causes, such as hiring with authenticity and representation in mind. We incorporated sign language, cast deaf talent for deaf roles, collaborated with mental health organisations for authentic portrayal, and experimented with new sound technology. It was a bold approach that underscored the impact of innovative storytelling and dedication, particularly as we navigated the journey from festivals to the Oscars," explained the director.

After *Things That Fall* qualified for the Academy Awards, Sy Huq realised his responsibility to address real issues through his narratives. He aimed to create films that would impact audiences and provoke reflection.

"My goal was to contribute to improving lives in some way. After four qualifications, I realised that the next step in my career was to scale up and significantly increase the impact I could make in my community," shared the filmmaker.

"My short films, like *Things That Fall*, draw inspiration from animated shorts such as *Paperman*. They utilise silent film principles to resonate with audiences, focusing on actions over dialogue and the power of non-verbal storytelling. Short films provided a rich education in bringing stories to life, and animation allows imagination to flourish with fewer limitations," Sy explained.

Currently, he's involved in undisclosed larger projects. However, he mentioned collaborating with Arthell Isom on D'ART's first Congolese anime feature, *MFINDA*.



PHOTOS: COURTESY

NEWS

Pakistan's ISI

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Omar Ayub Khan, said the agency would wield its powers even against government lawmakers, and vowed that his party would mount a court challenge.

The army's Inter-Services Public Relations Wing (ISPR) did not respond to a request for comment from Reuters.

"Is what is 'legal' also constitutional or right?" Farieha Aziz of rights advocacy group Bolo Bhi asked on X.

Scaloni hails grit of Messi & Co

FROM PAGE 12
This edition of the Copa America is likely to represent the last chance for many senior squad members to add to their trophy collection with the national team.

Angel di Maria, 36, said last year he would retire from international football after the Copa America, while Messi, 37, and Nicolas Otamendi, 36, are both nearing the end of their careers.

"You know how I feel about Angel. We don't want to retire him earlier than needed," Scaloni said.

"We don't want to feel melancholy. We have to let him play, and then we'll see if we can convince him or not to stay with us. But so far, he's here, and he has to be allowed to enjoy this moment.

"For Leo (Messi), it's similar to Angel. We have to let him be and we will never be the ones to close the door. He can be with our team for as long as he wants to be. And if he wants to retire but still come and hang around, it would be great."

In Sunday's final, Argentina could face either Uruguay, who beat them in a World Cup qualifier in November, or Colombia, who are on a 27-match unbeaten run under coach Nestor Lorenzo.

"These two potential opponents are top-notch national teams, but it would be reckless to say that I prefer one or the other," Scaloni said.

"One of them already beat us. It was a very tough match. We have not played against Colombia with this coach, but we know it could be very difficult as well."

Govt stock nearing exhaustion

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DGFP Director General ANM Al Firoz declined to make any comment on the issue.

"We have taken initiatives to procure contraception so that a crisis does not arise," Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen told The Daily Star.

Of the total population of 16.98 crore, the number of eligible couples is 2.81 crore, according to DGFP data.

At present, 37 percent of eligible couples receive contraceptives from the government and 3 percent from non-governmental organisations, according to government data. The remaining 60 percent get their contraception from the private sector.

Since there is a shortage of contraceptives, poor couples will find it difficult to take service from the private sector because of their high price, said Mohammad Mainul Islam, a professor and former chairman of the Dhaka University's population sciences department.

"Unintended pregnancies will also go up, which will scale up the mother and infant mortality rates. Pregnancy termination will also

increase. Therefore, there is a risk to reproductive health."

At present, the rate of unmet need for family planning is 10 percent and the government wants to bring it down to zero by 2030.

Unmet need for family planning is defined as the percentage of women of reproductive age, either married or in a union, who want to stop or delay childbearing but are not using any method of contraception.

If the supply is not uninterrupted, it will be difficult to meet that target, Mainul said.

"If unmet needs increase, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, maternal deaths -- all will rise."

Besides, achieving the total fertility rate of 2.1 will be difficult too, Mainul added.

Assuming there are no migration flows and that mortality rates remain unchanged, a total fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman generates broad stability of the population. It is also referred to as the "replacement fertility rate" as it ensures replacement of the woman and her partner with another 0.1 children per woman to counteract infant mortality.

Israeli strikes hit UN agency building in Gaza

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warned it would "remain a dangerous combat zone", an AFP journalist said.

The heightened military strikes come as Israeli officials started talks in Qatar yesterday on reaching a truce.

The Israeli military said that one overnight attack in Gaza City targeted Hamas and Islamic Jihad targets operating from inside the headquarters of the UN agency for Palestinians UNRWA.

UNRWA had no immediate comment on the attack, but has said it has "no way to verify" claims that its facilities are being used by Hamas and its allies.

Meanwhile Tuesday's deadly strike near the Al-Awda school in Abasan, near Khan Yunis, brought new condemnation from Hamas over the Israeli military tactics.

The Hamas government said a "majority" of the dead were women

and children.

At least 38,295 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive in the enclave since October 7, and 88,241 have been wounded, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday. A total of 52 Palestinians were killed in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said it had received dozens of desperate calls from residents in Gaza City trapped in their homes but their teams were unable to reach them because of the intensity of the bombing, reports Reuters.

"The information coming from Gaza City shows residents are living through tragic conditions. (Israeli) occupation forces continue to hit residential districts, and displace people from their homes and refugee shelters," it said in a statement.



Rescue workers search for missing persons after a landslide occurred due to heavy rain in Geumsan, South Korea yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Eight jailed for 7yrs over Ctg girder collapse

FROM PAGE 1
Parisa's Project Manager Gias Uddin, engineer Abdul Jalil, Quality Control Engineer Aminur Rahman, and employees Abdul Hai, Mosharraf Hossain, Manjurul Islam, Shahjahan Ali, and Rafiqul Islam.

The court sentenced the eight to five years' imprisonment and fined Tk 3 lakh each, in default, they have to suffer six months more in jail under section 304 (A) of the Penal Code. They were jailed for another two years under section 338/34 of the Penal Code.

The sentences will be executed one after another, and the money will be distributed to the victims' families who were killed and injured in the incident, said Public Prosecutor Abdur Rashid.

"The eight were present in the courtroom during the verdict

delivery, and all were sent to jail after cancellation of their bail," said Omar Fuad, bench assistant of the court.

Twenty-two out of 28 prosecution witnesses testified before the court during the trial, he added.

Convict Rafiqul's lawyer SUM Nurul Islam said, "We expressed our dissatisfaction over the judgment and will appeal to the higher court."

Omar Faruk, son of Elias who was killed in the incident, said they were not satisfied as the accused did not get the punishment they deserve.

In its observations, the court stated that the Chattogram Development Authority gave the victims Tk 50,000 each as compensation, which the court considers inadequate. By paying the compensation, the CDA indirectly accepted its responsibility for the incident.

The judge said the accused told the court that the names of high officials of the CDA and consultancy agencies were in the FIR, but those were not included in the charge sheet.

But neither the prosecution nor any victim lodged a no-confidence petition with the magistrate court at that time.

The court added that the prosecution witnesses did not mention anything about the dropped names.

If the court sent back the case for further investigation to include their names in the case, it would delay disposal of the case.

On November 24, 2012, three girders of under-construction Bahaddarhat flyover collapsed and fell on an adjacent kitchen market, leaving 13 people dead and over 27 others injured.

UNHRC adopts resolution

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She emphasised on the start of sustainable and voluntary repatriation of the Rohingyas by creating a congenial environment in Rakhine

The UN in the resolution expressed deep concern over recent violence

against the Rohingyas in Rakhine, their displacements, and forceful inclusion in Myanmar's armed forces, says the statement.

It also called on all parties in conflict in Myanmar to ensure protection and safety of Rohingyas.

It further expressed concern over the damage to property and people in neighbouring countries, including Bangladesh, due to ongoing conflict in Myanmar, and called on Myanmar to take necessary steps to maintain stability along its borders.