

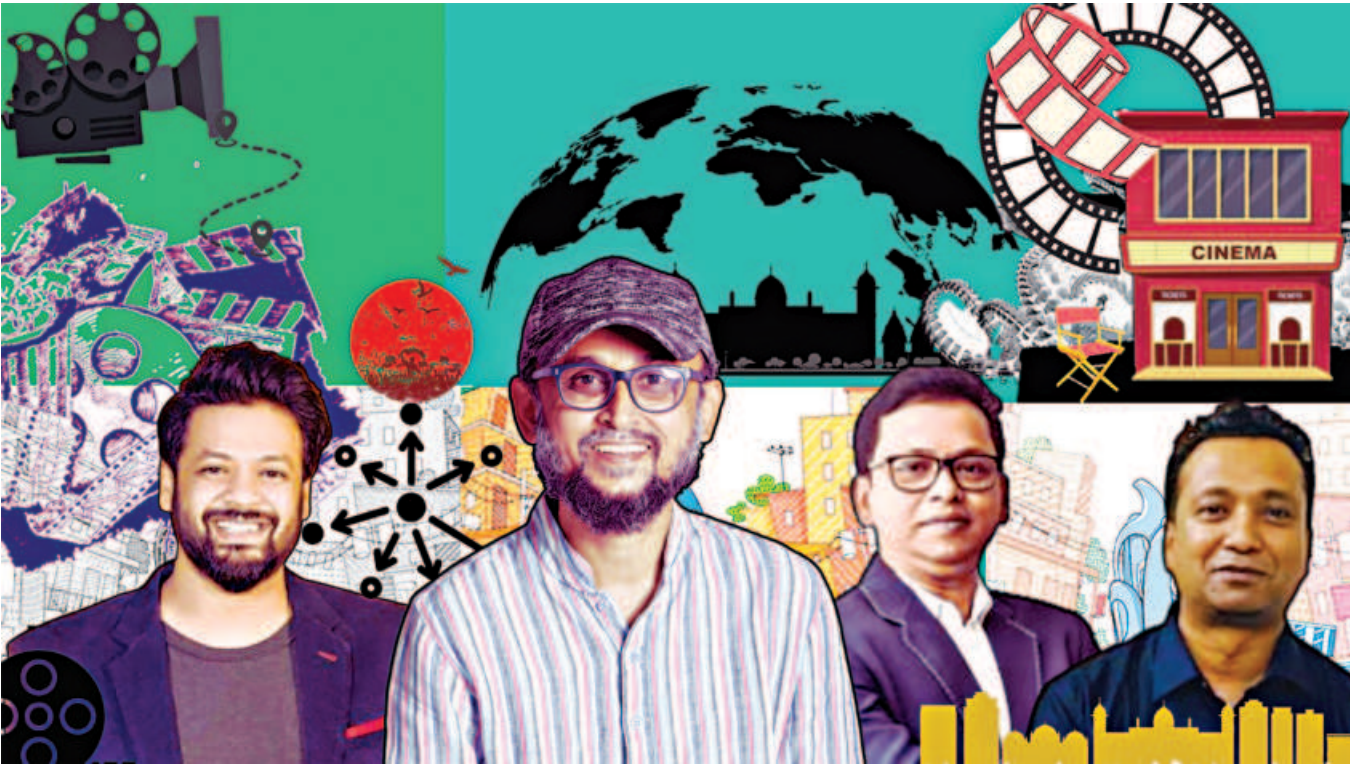
# ‘Monsoon Revolution’ workshop committee unveiled: What are the plans?

SHARMIN JOYA

Establishing a professional and structured film industry in Bangladesh has long been an ambitious yet elusive dream, often hindered by persistent challenges. However, a recent initiative announced by Cultural Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki at a recent press conference aims to turn this vision into reality and build a professional film industry in the country.

As part of this vision, Farooki outlined the “seven priority programmes” initiated by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. One of the flagship projects, titled *Monsoon Revolution*, seeks to decentralise filmmaking and nurture regional talents. To implement this vision, a four-member search committee has been formed.

The committee is chaired by Nafiza Shyama, additional secretary of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and includes prominent figures from the private sector– Dr Sumon Rahman, a celebrated writer and mass communication educator; filmmaker Tanim Noor; and producer-director Adnan Al Rajeev. They are joined by representatives from



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the Cabinet Division, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, and Syed Jamil Ahmed, director general of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

Their primary responsibility is to select eight distinguished filmmakers who will lead workshops in eight divisional cities. Each filmmaker will mentor participants

through hands-on training and direct a 40-minute film as part of the programme. This initiative aims to equip emerging filmmakers with the skills necessary to excel in the industry.

During a conversation with The Daily Star, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki explained the significance of this initiative.

“As discussed during the press conference on November 21, Under the *Monsoon Revolution* project, eight established filmmakers will conduct workshops in eight divisions. Aspiring filmmakers will learn the craft directly from these directors. Following the workshops, 10 participants from each division will work as assistant directors on the films created by their mentors. This will result in eight films and nurture 80 budding filmmakers who can carry the industry forward.”

Farooki described this effort as a transformative step toward decentralising the industry and empowering young

talents to pursue their filmmaking aspirations.

Adnan Al Rajeev also highlighted the significance of the initiative, stating, “We are currently awaiting a meeting where we will collectively decide which filmmakers will take on the projects. We definitely want to move forward with the finest makers, depending on their availability. Personally, I am fully aware of the responsibility and importance of this initiative. I believe this is a groundbreaking idea for our country. While Dhaka has historically been the main hub for entertainment, I hope this effort will expand opportunities to all divisions, allowing filmmakers to emerge from every corner of the nation.”

He further added, “Now is the time to tell our stories on both national and international platforms. This initiative provides a chance to ensure that the next generation of filmmakers can contribute to the global stage.”

Filmmaker Tanim Noor shared his perspective on the decentralisation of cultural activities. “Our industry is highly Dhaka-centric. However, projects like *Shaaticup* have demonstrated the potential of regional talents. Unfortunately, many lack professional training and resources, which limits their ability to succeed. This initiative bridges that gap by providing essential training and creative freedom for regional artists to thrive.”

The *Monsoon Revolution* represents an unprecedented effort by the government to decentralise and professionalise the Bangladeshi film industry. By fostering regional talent and offering a platform for diverse storytelling, this initiative aims to reshape the industry. More than just an effort to develop skilled filmmakers, it is a step toward amplifying Bangladeshi narratives and creating works that resonate both nationally and internationally.



## 175 cultural activists call for a separate film division at BSA

In protest of the exclusion of the “Film” section from the “Drama and Film” sub-division in the revised Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Act, 175 film-related individuals have issued a public statement, demanding the formation of a separate film division.

The statement presented arguments in support of this demand, signed by filmmakers, producers, cinematographers, editors, sound designers, film critics, researchers, teachers, film workers and organisers, actors, musicians, and photographers.

Notable signatories include Nurul Alam Atique, N Rashed Chowdhury, Akram Khan, Shabnam Ferdousi, Tokon Thakur, Noman Robin, Wahid Tareq, Proshoon Rahmaan, Redoan Rony, Khijir Hayat Khan, Krishnendu Chattopadhyay and Zakia Bari Mamo, amongst others.



## ‘Laapataa Ladies’ makes record at Japan box office

According to the latest trade reports, Kiran Rao’s *Laapataa Ladies* has surpassed the lifetime earnings of *Pathaan* and *Salaar: Part 1 – Ceasefire* in Japan.

While SS Rajamouli’s *RRR* continues to hold the title of highest-grossing Indian film in Japan, the total box office collection of *Laapataa Ladies* is also remarkable.

# NEWS

## Bangladesh to face substantial losses

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Different studies have suggest that Bangladesh’s trade losses might be even larger, Razzaque said.

The estimated export loss to the EU range between 5 percent to 19 percent if Bangladesh gets a standard Generalised System of Preferences.

The projected tariff rates for apparel exports to the EU, Canada and Australia are 9.5 percent, 17 percent, and 5 percent respectively.

The largest decline in exports is for the textile and apparel sector, estimated at 14.7 per cent, followed by food and leather.

The impact of garment export shocks could slash GDP by 0.39 to 1.17 percent and employment by 0.41 to 0.88 million, according to the study.

The poverty rate could increase by 0.14 percentage points and depress labour returns by 5.5 percent. It will also have an impact on household consumption.

The strategy paper also said recent unfavourable macroeconomic developments add to longstanding economic challenges and vulnerabilities for Bangladesh.

These include a weakening balance

of payments situation reflected in a decline in foreign reserves and persistent domestic inflationary pressures that further strain the economy.

Apart from the above, external shocks are occurring with greater frequency, complicating development efforts.

Geopolitical tensions, the US-China trade war, the pandemic and the Ukraine war have disrupted global trade and affected a developing region like Bangladesh.

“These combined factors underscore the uncertainties and difficulties Bangladesh faces in its graduation journey,” the strategy paper said.

Bangladesh’s journey towards LDC graduation also gives credence and thrust to the reform agenda of the interim government, said Lutfe Siddiqi, special envoy on international affairs to the chief adviser.

Recently, exports from three sectors including jute, furniture and light engineering declined because of the government’s decision to cut down the incentive on export receipts, said Syed Nasim Manzur, president of the Leathergoods and

Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association of Bangladesh.

He also suggested a rethink and not jumping into the decision to proceed with the LDC graduation.

Ichiguchi Tomohide, the chief representative of JICA Bangladesh, suggested the creation of a single ministry in investment, to make at least three economic zones fully functional, a real one-stop service centre, incentives for some sectors like automotive, the introduction of customs in the economic zones and a national single window.

Bangladesh can be a role model for other LDCs, said Taffere Tesfachew, member of the UN Committee for Development Policy and the Rapporteur for Bangladesh.

The UN will hold a meeting in New York on December 17 on LDC graduation and some important decisions may come from this meeting.

Lamiya Morshed, principal coordinator to the SDG; M Siraz Uddin Miah, principal secretary to chief adviser; Gwyn Lewis, UN resident coordinator in Bangladesh; and ERD Secretary Md. Shahriar Kader Siddiky also spoke.

## US SEC issues

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listed companies.

Adani Group representatives did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment yesterday.

The group has denied the criminal charges as “baseless”. The group CFO said the indictment is linked to one contract of Adani Green Energy that makes up some 10 percent of its business, and that no other firms in the conglomerate were accused of wrongdoing.

Federal prosecutors issued arrest warrants for Gautam and Sagar Adani, alleging they participated in a \$265 million scheme to bribe Indian officials to secure power-supply deals.

Authorities said Adani and seven other defendants, including his nephew Sagar, agreed to bribe Indian government officials to obtain contracts expected to yield \$2 billion of profit over 20 years, and develop India’s largest solar power plant project.

## Govt should set up minority commission

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members of the indigenous communities.

“Some argue that constitutional recognition alone won’t solve all problems, but they fail to explain why it would be problematic. Recognition is undeniably a right, given their heritage and culture.”

He added that the rights of indigenous people would never be upheld unless all citizens viewed their struggles as a collective national concern.

Regarding the implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, he said, “No force, not even the prime minister, could implement the Peace Accord alone. The only entity capable of doing so is the Bangladesh Army. Just as they have been recognised globally for establishing peace, I hope they will play a similar role in the hills. We know that if you [the army] want, you can do it.”

Sarwar Tusher, a member of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee, said the country’s constitution is not race-neutral. “What is needed is a constitution that is both non-communal and race-neutral.”

He expressed concerns over the potential travesty in reform commissions, citing the example of the interim government appointing former bureaucrats as the chief election commission and commissioners under

the existing laws.

“These bureaucrats were complicit in the misrule under the previous regime and have never apologised for supporting authoritarian governance.”

Tusher also criticised Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus for suggesting that reforms would not occur without the consensus of political parties.

“Dr Yunus, you must remember that political parties did not lead the uprising; it was the students and the masses who brought about change.”

He called for the establishment of two additional commissions – an education commission and a minority commission – and urged citizens to move beyond the narrative that only the Awami League is the defender of minority rights.

Jahangirnagar University teacher Snigdha Rizwana pointed out that indigenous communities were excluded from all commissions due to the unchanged mindset of the ruling authorities.

“The indigenous communities have not been represented because the rulers’ mindset has not evolved. Despite their unique culture, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs has not taken any steps to preserve it [indigenous culture]. In some cases, instead of protecting their rights, the state has taken their lands in the name of development.”

She argued that the state is reluctant to recognise indigenous communities

because such recognition would necessitate granting them special rights.

Prothom Alo Joint Editor Sohrab Hossain also stressed the importance of constitutional recognition for indigenous people. “Without it, the crisis will intensify,” he warned.

Shamsul Huda, executive director of the Association for Land Reform and Development, called for the establishment of additional commissions on Land Reform and Agriculture, alongside the education and minority commissions.

Nai U Prue Marma, a member of the Rangamati Parbatya Zila Parishad, demanded the implementation of the CHT Peace Accord and the inclusion of the 1900 Regulations in the constitution’s schedule.

Prodip Kumar Mahottam, an additional secretary of the CHT Ministry, highlighted the state’s efforts to improve the conditions of indigenous communities.

The event also featured a visual presentation on the overall situation of indigenous people by Pallab Chakma, executive director of the Kapaceng Foundation. Ajoy A Mree presided over the session.

Among others, ILO official Amexius Chicham, Bangladesh Adivasi Parishad leader Philemon Baske, and indigenous leader Flora Bably Talang, also spoke at the event.

## Disband the new EC

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it must fulfil the promised reforms.

“If this government leaves after one year or slightly more without completing the desired reforms and holding elections, it will face accusations of exceeding the three-month timeframe stipulated for a caretaker government, thereby questioning its legitimacy.”

She said they do not want to hear undesirable remarks from the chief adviser, such as “reforms would be impossible if political parties opposed them.”

Nasiruddin Patwary, convener of the platform, warned of taking to the streets again if any step goes beyond the spirit of mass uprising.

“If the recommendations of the reform commission and the spirit of the mass uprising are ignored, we will return to the streets. We will unite the people once again and wage an unyielding protest against any government – current or future

– that deviates from the spirit of the mass uprising.”

He said they envisioned a new dream after August 5, and the interim government was formed to fulfil that dream.

“However, we are repeatedly disheartened by the government’s failure to meet our expectations.

“Political parties have a commitment to the people and are supposed to assist the government, but we do not see them fulfilling that role. Instead, we observe them becoming entangled in tender manipulation and extortion, rushing towards a hasty electoral process.”

He alleged that the EC helped establish a fascist regime, and holding elections without restructuring it and its laws would betray the martyrs’ sacrifices.

Member secretary of the platform Akhter Hossen also spoke at the briefing.

## 30 injured as students run riot

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The gathering stretched to Kabi Nazrul College. At one stage, the protesting students tried to break into the college but could not.

The protesters attacked Suhrawardy College after a small group of students of the college tried to chase the demonstrators away from outside Kabi Nazrul College around 1:00pm.

Panic spread inside Suhrawardy College as honours first-year exams for the seven colleges affiliated with Dhaka University were ongoing there.

The protesters vandalised three motorcycles, a car, a microbus, and an ambulance parked on the college campus.

They damaged the office and classrooms during the rampage until around 5:00pm.

Talking to The Daily Star, a Mollah College student said at that time, “The students of the two colleges

[Suhrawardy and Kabi Nazrul] attacked us. We will give them a befitting reply.”

As the protesting students left the area around 5:30pm, the students of Kabi Nazrul and Suhrawardy colleges attacked St Gregory’s High School & College, witnesses said. The assailants damaged the institution’s entrance, suspecting its students joined the attack on Suhrawardy College.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Suhrawardy College Principal Prof Kakali Mukhopadhyay alleged that the local authorities did not cooperate to protect the college.

“Before we could apprehend anything, we saw on CCTV that a lot of boys and girls had come. They broke the gate and vandalised everything at will,” she said.

“They released the gas line. Can real students be so violent?”

Md Jasim Uddin, Lalbagh Division deputy commissioner of Dhaka

Metropolitan Police, said the hospital authorities formed a probe committee over Avijit’s death.

They assured the protesters of taking disciplinary action if any negligence was found, but the students continued the protests, he said.

**SUHRWARDY ANNOUNCES CLOSURE**

Later in the evening, students of Suhrawardy College announced an indefinite closure of the institution, demanding the immediate identification and exemplary punishment of those involved in the attack on the institution.

They also threatened to disaffiliate Mollah College if their demands were not met.

Anti-Discrimination Student Movement leaders of Suhrawardy College made the announcement at a press conference held on the college premises.