

# 'Rehana Maryam Noor': Bangladesh's first film at Cannes is a powerful watch



CHENNAI: The first work from Bangladesh to feature in the Cannes Film Festival's Un Certain Regard section, "Rehana Maryam Noor," is a powerful film with a feminist message that takes its title from its protagonist, a young widowed doctor with a daughter in the first grade.



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This is Abdullah Mohammad Saad's second endeavor as a director, and as the film rolls on, we see Noor's hardened attitude toward anything she considers inappropriate. She also teaches medicine, and when she finds a professor abusing a student, she is compellingly unrelenting.

Noor, played by Azmeri Haque Badhon , will stop at nothing. When she fails to encourage the girl who was molested to press charges, the doctor decides to “confess” that she was the one who was raped and hopes that the perpetrator will be forced to quit.



The cast and crew of 'Rehana Maryam Noor' arrive for the screening of the film as part of the Un Certain Regard selection at the 74th edition of the Cannes Film Festival, southern France, on July 9, 2021. (AFP)

Traces of anxiety and violence in Noor play out in the second half. A significant part of her life revolves around her daughter, Emu (a cute Afia Jahin Jaima), and the little one appears to be as stubborn as her mother. Their battle of wits leads to understandable tension, which Noor transports to her workplace.

Saad's script is narrated through a handheld camera while a color palette that revolves around shades of blue (perhaps to convey the melancholic mood of the whole drama) underlines Noor's restlessness, seemingly a result of her own fraught personal life.

The movie has a haunting sense of sparseness which enhances the tight plot. Focused and directed with precision, “Rehana Maryam Noor” leaves the viewer with troubling questions about the manner in which the protagonist seeks to fulfill a just cause.

ADVERTISING