

2023
FILMLAB SOUTH ASIA

SURAIYA

BANGLADESH



MAIN DATA

Category	Drama, Mystery
Length	90 mins
Language	Bengali
Shooting format	Digital
Shooting location	Bangladesh, Turkey
Shooting dates	March to May, 2025
Expected date of completion	January 2026
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	367,324 €
Financing in place	56,000 €
Production company	Ratherhood Initiatives
Workshop & platform attended	Asian Project Market 2023

SYNOPSIS

Desperate to flee the country, MONSUR has to quickly learn Turkish. This takes him into a language center with a weird trainer. Monsur's sole classmate SURAIYA maintains an uncomfortable distance. A practice of the newly taught vocabulary brings them closer. Suraiya is desperate to get into Turkey following the trails of her lover. Wading through the labyrinth of grammar, Monsur grows an obsessed attraction for Suraiya. The trainer disappears midway and they discover that the half-taught language is not Turkish, but something invented by the lunatic trainer. Eventually they realize that the imaginary language provides them with a secret bridge. All Monsur needed is to make it exclusive.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The unusual way the original story dealt with love and language intrigued me. These are the themes I always wanted to explore in my films. To me, the invented language that the plot revolves around mirrors a city - a city that stands as a port of transit for both the protagonists. I intend to deal with migration as a guiding theme - migration as a physical and psychological condition which strips away meaning not only from language, but from every established system of reference.

A language without meaning, a city without permanence and a love affair that holds uncertainty at its core - this is my film in a nutshell.

DIRECTOR ROBIUL ALAM ROBI



Robi's directorial and writing credits span over a period of ten years, with a number of fictional shorts, series and a feature film which have been screened on various platforms and film festivals.

His directorial credits include the short films Eki Pothe (2017) and Aquarium (2017), Maghfirat (2018) (featured in the anthology film Sincerely Yours, Dhaka (2018), and the feature film Café Desire (2022). Sincerely Yours, Dhaka (2018) premiered at the 23rd Busan International Film Festival. His film depicts the unusual human condition with formal cinematic expressions. Apart from filmmaking, Robi teaches Screenplay Writing and Direction at the Bangladesh Cinema and Television Institute.

PRODUCER FAZLE HASAN SHISHIR



Fazle Hasan Shishir is a Bangladeshi producer-director-curator. His filmography spans over a period of twelve years in various fields of practical filmmaking serving numerous short films, documentaries, commercials as a cinematographer, director and producer. His producing credit includes film like Mukuler Jadur Ghora (2021), Café Desire (2022). His projects in developments are: Tulshimala (2022 onwards), An Imaginary Interview (2022 onwards), Suraiya (2022 onwards). His fictional directorial debut short Jhiripoth Periy (2023) is ready for its festival premiere. Apart from these projects, Shishir is consulting a handful of short films and documentaries.

CONTACT

Producer - Fazle Hasan Shishir - khalasi.shishir@gmail.com

Screenwriter & co-producer - Shibabrata Barman - bratabarman@gmail.com

Director - Robiul Alam Robi - robiulalamrobi@gmail.com

SCREENWRITER & CO-PRODUCER SHIBABRATA BARMAN



A fiction and screenplay writer, Shibabrata Barman has a unique way of story-telling. He often uses the tools of genre-writing in weaving stories that bend the borders of the genre and drag them into a philosophical battlefield. He weaves a space and time that defies geography and contemporaneity. The impossibilities of communication and the bottomless vortex of conspiracy theories are two major themes that reverberate in his fictional universe.

His first book, Banialulu (2018) – a collection of science fiction stories – got a wide range of readership beyond the enthusiasts of the genre. His second book Suraiya, again an anthology of short stories – was picked by Anandabazar, the largest Bangla language daily, as one of the 10 best Bengali books published in 2022. Several of Barman's works have been adapted into movies and web series. A journalist by profession, Barman resides in Dhaka.

2023
FILMLAB SOUTH ASIA

LAST TIME ON EARTH

INDIA



MAIN DATA

Category	Drama
Length	90 mins
Language	Hindi, Bengali
Shooting format	Digital
Shooting location	India
Shooting dates	September 2024
Expected date of completion	January 2025
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	550,000 €
Financing in place	129,000 €
Production company	Marvi Films, Ronronear Films, Damned Films
Workshop & platform attended	NFDC Screenwriter's Lab

SYNOPSIS

Last Time on Earth is the story of Manna and his persistent dream of magical proportions. He is a construction worker who left his village to work in the city. While he toils in the night-time metropolis, his dreams – literally day-time dreams seeping into scattered sleep – take him repeatedly to the moon. Manna works in its glow and has recurring dreams of it. They are dreams that metamorphose into signs, and finally into an idea that he plans to execute with his friend Kazi's help.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The image of the migrant worker in the city is simplified through conventional stereotypes of him as a victim, vulnerable to the conditions he lives in, as an outsider, beneficiary of the state. Such an image limits his identity to wages and survival, and leaves him out of the larger political discourse on migration and urbanism. Such representation leaves out his views on the world, his melancholia, his philosophy, his idea of progress and development, his desires, which lend to the meanings of labour, social relations, development and economics in the contemporary context. The film will push us closer to Manna the lead character and make us believe the moon is where he must reach. Not because it's a mere whim. Manna's preoccupation with the Moon liberates his body from his political identity as a worker. It renders his detachment from real life as his victory. This film brings together my own search for belonging and culminates in an acute awareness of my own privileges.

CONTACT

Producer - Anjali Panjabi - films.marvi@gmail.com
Director - Paromita Dhar - rumpidhar@gmail.com



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PRODUCER ANJALI PANJABI



Anjali Panjabi is an independent producer & filmmaker based in Mumbai. She has collaborated with filmmakers like Mira Nair, Sabiha Sumar, Sooni Taraporevala & Prashant Bhargava. The projects she has worked on have travelled to several international film festivals including Berlin, Venice, Busan, Tribeca to name a few.

Anjali is the founder of Marvi Film which aims to produce International quality films, from a South Asian perspective. At present the company is producing 'Ghetto Girls' a documentary feature supported by European Documentary Network and 'Last Time on Earth, Paromita Dhar's debut feature supported by HBF & NFDC, India.

DIRECTOR PAROMITA DHAR



She is the cinematographer of the Award winning documentary Project Behind the Tin Sheets, she has shot Birha which premiered in Busan international film festival and IDFA in 2018. She also shot the film That cloud never left which premiered at Rotterdam international film festival

2019. While living in Madrid she directed her own film In between. She is currently working on her first feature length fiction film Last time on Earth which was selected for NFDC screenwriters lab and got the Hubert Bals script and project development funds 2019. She has also been part of Berlinale Talents 2021

2023

FILMLAB SOUTH ASIA

STORM BIRD

JHORER PAKHI

INDIA

MAIN DATA

Category	Drama/Fantasy
Length	90 mins
Language	Bengali, Nepali, Hindi
Shooting format	Digital
Shooting location	India
Shooting dates	30 days (March, July, October)
Expected date of completion	January 2026
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	706,401 €
Financing in place	20 %
Production company	Humaramovie, Pilgrim Film, Corte A Films
Workshop & platform attended	Journey to Europe Screenwriting Competition (2021)

SYNOPSIS

Twenty-year old siblings Amira and Munir escape their flooded village in Bangladesh and enter into India. In order to lay low, they head up North to the Sikkim-Himalayan region, unknowingly following the trail of the same river that drowned their village : the transboundary river Teesta. By a stroke of luck, they discover a hidden land named Agartha. Here they meet middle aged landlady Anna, and the elder caretaker Shambhu. Unexpectedly, Amira and Anna develop an uncanny relationship and begin to communicate with the natural world through shared dreams and visions. Meanwhile, Shambhu and Munir plan to put an end to a destructive hydropower-project in the region. Over time, the four of them get entangled between the forces of the known and the unknown, and finally, a raging storm that awakens a new world residing underneath Agartha.



PRODUIRE AU SUD

FESTIVAL des 3 CONTINENTS

Ateliers de formation à la coproduction internationale

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I belong to a hill tribe called the 'Garos', located in Meghalaya, Northeast India. The most cherished memories from my childhood are of fascinating tales of kinship between the human and non-human. Those stories haven't left me ever since. Storm Bird is a shift from my earlier films which were all set in closed urban spaces, perhaps because I was raised in cities which always made me feel trapped and isolated. Soon after my family decided to move back to the hills, the pandemic took over. If I could trace back my awakening, or my attention towards the interconnected nature of our existence, then it would have to be that period. I became more curious, more involved in my own past and the collective past of my community. I developed a deep interest in the relationship between people who live in the frontlines of natural degradation and also share a deep kinship with the processes of the natural world. Amira, the protagonist, embodies individuals who have been displaced but remain rooted to the memories of their land and rivers. In Storm Bird, I imagine what could happen, or is happening, when nature and the non-human reclaims its agency. Storm Bird could be a feminist idea because it focuses on the relation between women and nature. Women are related to nature not because they're feminine or nature is feminized, but because they are both a male dominated force. Lastly, Storm Bird imagines the birth of a new world, only to understand that we are forever tethered to the will of the planet, and that after destruction, there is rebirth, a new world that protects inhabitants that it deems fit.

CONTACT

Producer - Preety Ali - preety@humaramovie.com

Director - Jenifer Datta Areng - jeniferadatta@gmail.com



PRODUCER PREETY ALI



Preety Ali began career in television as the creative head of Sony entertainment, after which she moved onto films and has been the producer of award winning films like Black Friday, Parineeta and her most recent work, the critically acclaimed Laila Majnu which (2018). Preety is the

co-founder of HumaraMovie which was set up in 2011 as a short film platform. Having produced more than 300 short films Humaramovie has also produced award winning independent feature films like, Jaon Kahan Bata Ae Dil – Currently streaming on Netflix, Follower – Official Selection at the International Film Festival of Rotterdam, 2023 and winner of Best Screenplay at the New York Indian Film Festival, Tortoise Under The Earth – Official Selection at Cartagena FICCI, Sao Paulo International Film Festival and winner of the Vanguard Award at Vancouver International Film Festival.

DIRECTOR JENIFER DATTA ARENG



Jenifer is a writer/director based out of Meghalaya, India. Her short films include Little Things (2014), Thank You For Watching (2017), Station After The Last (2016) and Tear (2019.) Storm Bird is her debut feature. In November 2021, her script won the 'Journey to Europe' script development program held by the EU, Cineuropa and DIFF, India.

In May 2023, the film was invited to participate at Marche Du Film, Cannes to pitch the film to international producers for further support.

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TERMINAL 3

INDIA



MAIN DATA

Category	Coming of age, Sports, Drama
Length	100 mins
Language	Hindi
Shooting format	Digital
Shooting location	India
Shooting dates	Sept/Oct 2024
Expected date of completion	July/Aug 2025
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	1,062,945 €
Financing in place	NA
Production company	FilmsPositive
Workshop & platform attended	NA

SYNOPSIS

Khwab, a Kashmiri girl, has it all. Youth, ambition and a passion for Jiu-Jitsu. But Kashmir is terrorised by violence and civil strife. Battling appalling sports facilities, internet blackouts and power cuts, she teams up with coach Omar, her friends Noor and Yusuf (Noor's love interest), and proves her mettle in Delhi which opens the doors for the world championship. In her long and perilous struggle, her father is arrested after a major terror attack, Noor is blinded, and Yusuf is killed but Khwab doesn't stop her practice. In a heart-stopping race against time, she musters the strength and money to train in Delhi but fate delivers a final blow after the 2019 lockdown in Kashmir.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

War. Suppression. Aspiration. Kashmir has been burning for the past two decades. Debasmita's book Terminal 3 is a coming-of-age story of a young teen in Kashmir, her spunk, her quiet desperation, her willpower, her sacrifice and her dream. Through this film, our vision is to bring these ideas to life on screen. Khwab's rise in Jiu Jitsu, her talent, and her overwhelming odds mirror Kashmir itself.

Jiu Jitsu is translated as a gentle art. It offers one to look at a fight not as a competitive sport, but rather as a means to attain integrity and strength. The film will stress these philosophies through Khwab's relationship lines.

Sharp, witty, dynamic and irreverent tones will capture the zest and spunk of youth and a sense of deep optimism despite the staggering odds against the central aspiration. Jiu-Jitsu action will be constructed with realism using responsive, dynamic camera moves with tight close-ups detailing the mental and physical aspects of the fight.

CONTACT

Producer & co-director - Debasmita Dasgupta -

debasmita@artspositive.org

Co-director - Anshul Tiwari - anshul@filmspositive.com



PRODUCER & CO-DIRECTOR

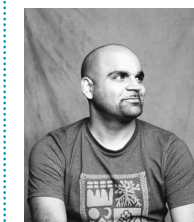
DEBASMITA DASGUPTA



Debasmita Dasgupta is an award-winning South-Asian film producer, graphic novelist, screenwriter, and the co-founder of FILMSPOSITIVE, a film and art company. Her feature film credits include Dust and the Wind (Post-Production, 2023) and Before Life After Death (Singapore International Film Festival, Netflix, 2022). Short films include Sugee Cake (CinemaWorld Asia, 2020), Dear New Neighbour (iMDA Singapore, 2020), Bin Bulaaye (Large Shorts Award Winner, Mumbai Film Festival, Disney Hotstar, 2019), and Wabi Sabi (Mumbai International Film Festival, 2018). Feature film projects in development are - The Killing Ganj, Terminal 3 (graphic novel to screen), and Renters.

Her graphic novels include Terminal 3 (Penguin Random House), Nadya (Scholastic India), Faiza is a Fighter (Soaring Kite Books, USA, 2024), and Karubaki (Flying Eye Books, UK, 2025).

CO-DIRECTOR ANSHUL TIWARI



Anshul Tiwari is a South Asian film director, editor, and screenwriter. A BIFA (British Indie Film Awards) Springboard fellow, his feature film credits include Dust and the Wind (Post-Production, 2023), Before Life After Death (Singapore International Film Festival, Netflix, 2022) and A Gran Plan (Edited by, 2012). Short films include Sugee Cake (CinemaWorld Asia, 2020), Dear New Neighbour (iMDA Singapore, 2020), JIO-MAMI Large Shorts Award Winner Bin Bulaaye (Disney Hotstar, 2019), and Wabi Sabi (Mumbai International Film Festival, 2018).

He has created nearly 50 short documentary works. Key works include Break The Silence (Best Film, Shorty Social Good Media Award, Los Angeles and SIMA Social Impact Media Award), and Rosario (Best Documentary, IAFOR FilmAsia Japan).

His key screenplays in development include — The Killing Ganj, Renters, Terminal 3 and Shona.

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SON OF A HONEY HUNTER

NEPAL



MAIN DATA

Category	Historical Drama
Length	80 mins
Language	Gurung
Shooting format	4K
Shooting location	Nepal
Shooting dates	October 2024
Expected date of completion	May 2025
Stage of production	In development

PRODUCTION

Budget	200,000 €
Financing in place	30,000 €
Production company	Pacific Solution Films
Workshop & platform attended	NA

SYNOPSIS

December 1945, set in the mountainous terrain of Nepal, Son of a Honey Hunter is the story of Mani, an aging indigenous Honey Hunter, who awaits his son's return from the Second World War. The son finally returns and they reunite in the nearby city army camp. Mani finds out that his son has lost limbs in the war. As they have to make an arduous hike from the city to their village, Mani is worried about his son's physical disability. The father and the son are reuniting after years and the war has had an adverse effect on his son. Will Mani and his son be able to hike and reach their village? Will a father be able to reconnect with his son after all these years?

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My connection to this story goes back to the time before I was born. I come from the Gurung Indigenous tribe in the mountains of Nepal. My great grandfather was a tribal honey hunter and he climbed mountain cliffs to extract wild honey. Our village was far away undisturbed from the rest of the world. When World War II began, its waves reached our village. In 1815, the British had made a sly treaty called the "Sugauli Treaty" to not conquer Nepal, but recruit them and called the soldiers "Gurkhas". Many young men from indigenous clans were recruited to fight for the British during the Second World War. My grandfather being one of them. As a kid, I thought the story of my grandfather was the story of bravery. He would tell me his heroic deeds in the war. But, as I grew up, and started understanding the situation of indigenous communities, I soon realized the story of the Gurkhas was in fact a story of tragedy. It made me ponder upon how an indigenous person from a simple village would end up in the horrible trenches of war.

CONTACT

Producer - Hit Kumari Gurung - heeetagurung@gmail.com
Director - Prabhat Gurung - pbtgrg786@gmail.com



PRODUCER HIT KUMARI GURUNG



Hit Kumari Gurung is a film producer based in Nepal. She has been producing short films and commercials since 2021. With over fifteen years as an Education/Public Health professional in community development in Nepal, she is interested in supporting and nurturing the indigenous stories from her communities. In 2022, she produced the short, The Monk and The Rebel, which was awarded the 2022 National Board of Review Student Grant. The name of the production house is Pacific Films.

DIRECTOR PRABHAT GURUNG



Prabhat Gurung is an independent writer/director born of the Gurung indigenous tribe. Gurung's rural upbringing in Nepal inspires his meditative filmmaking style, with a focus on mankind's relationship to nature. His short film, The Monk and The Rebel, was awarded the 2022 National Board of Review Student Grant. His script is also the recipient of the Chantal Akerman Student Award 2021. He holds an MFA in Film from The City College of New York, and a BA from Caldwell University, where he studied Communication and Media Studies.