

Marina Tabassum named in TIME's list of the 100 Most Influential People for 2024

April 18, 2024

Online Desk: Bangladeshi architect Marina Tabassum has been named in influential US weekly TIME magazine's list of the 100 Most Influential People in the world for 2024. Tabassum was named in the Innovators section of the list for her commitment to sustainable design that "prioritises local cultures and values, as well as the perils faced by our shared planet."

The citation for Tabassum, written for TIME by Sarah Whiting, dean of the Harvard School for Design, says: "Tabassum's altruism even extends to buildings themselves. She cares for her creations as creatures partaking in the resources of our earth: describing her Bait Ur Rouf Mosque in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which won the prestigious Aga Khan Award, she said a building "has to be able to breathe without artificial aids." Elsewhere in the country, which faces increased flood risks due to climate change, she has developed houses that are cost-effective and easy to move—clearly, buildings shouldn't just breathe; they should avoid getting their feet wet. While she practices very locally, she teaches, lectures, and is recognized internationally, modeling architecture not as an individual signature but as a collective Esperanto."

Tabassum's work was previously honoured with the 2016 Aga Khan Award for Architecture and with the Soane Medal by the American Academy of Arts and Letters Awards in 2021.

She was also named as the winner of the Millennium Lifetime Achievement Award at the Lisbon Architecture Triennale in 2022.

Tabassum is the principal architect of Marina Tabassum Architects, which she founded in 2005. Previously she was at URBANA, which she co-founded in 1995, shortly after graduating from BUET in 1994.

She broke into the limelight with her design for the Bait ur Rauf Mosque in Abdullahpur, that won her the Aga Khan Award, and pioneered a new generation of architects in embracing indigenous design principles for mosques, distinguished by the lack of domes, the use of plinths, the earthen palette, and the intelligent, at times bewitching use of light streaming in through perforations on the roof and walls.