

COVER STORY

SHOKH

Be My Valentine

Anika Kabir Shokh is a bombshell of an actress who's been winning hearts ever since she appeared on screen back in 2002. In the last decade, she has gained a dedicated fan base and has proven her talents in the eyes of thousands. For this year's Valentines issue, we bring a special side of Shokh – going deeper into her life and what kind of a man she would consider to be the perfect valentine.

How did you come into the media industry?

My journey into the media realm started with dance. I was spotted through my dance performances. Originally, I didn't plan to work in the media. But things changed when my popularity with the fans rose through my work in TVCs. Primarily the Toshin Fan TVC and Parachute Hair Oil TVC by Mustafa Sarwar Farooqi. But the turning point for my TVC career was Uro Lemon by Indian director Siddharto Sen and the famous Banglalink TVC by Samir Ahmed, where I was cast alongside Sarika.

Tell us about your career, and your work in the film industry.

I have worked in TVCs, television dramas and now films. The reason for which I didn't do them all together at once is because I believe that I need to excel in each sector before I move on to the next or else I won't properly learn and grow as an actor. That is why I focused on TVC's first until I managed to achieve what I wanted. Soon after, I moved to TV dramas although I don't really do TV serials. The first film that I did, I did so while still being a novice in the field. The movie was called "Bolo Na Tumi Amar"

where I acted beside superstar Shakib Khan. Then after I got to grips with the industry, I acted in my second movie "Olpo Olpo Premer Golpo" where I acted alongside Niloy Alamgir. The movie was released last year, but we actually shot the film four years ago, but it wasn't released earlier due to some technical issues. We all thought that after four years, it might not be so well received by the audience but thankfully, they liked it regardless. Last year, I focused entirely on TV dramas and now, the audience has recognized me as an actor. I will focus completely on cinemas this year. I am already in talks for a couple of upcoming film projects so let's see what happens.

What attributes would you like to see in your

ideal man?

I am incredibly selective when it comes to my significant other. I believe that my ideal man must be trustworthy, honest, highly educated and must come from a good family. Many of these traits are rare and a little old fashioned, but then again, I prefer how love was back in the day. Back in the day, love was a cherished and was based on a sacred bond that didn't degrade with time. If there were any problems, people believed in fixing them rather than giving up. Nowadays, we see people breaking up at the first sign of trouble. I believe this issue has risen from the fact that nowadays there is simply too many options available so no one bothers to fix anything because it's easier to start something new. The standards are low now. As for me, I have been in love before, but as they didn't work out, I learned my mistakes and will remember the lessons I've learnt for the future. I don't have any fixations on being with someone from the media or outside, all that matters to me is whether or not he is right for me or not.

Is it true that you are also an entrepreneur?

Yes. I run an online boutique called The Hanger by Shokh, where I sell clothes that I design. You see I loved designing since I was very little, along with dancing of course. Whenever I had the chance, I designed my own clothes. Now I am studying Fashion Design and decided to start this business. I want to keep it online as it saves me the hassle of running a physical store, which I do not have time for. Plus it's a very convenient platform for both my customers and myself. I am getting really good response on Facebook, which is really nice because it's only been months that I started this.

Since you have worked in almost all sectors of the media, namely TV and Film, what do you think is the difference between these two mediums?

The differences between working in TV Dramas and Films are huge. I'll mention some of the more important ones. One is budget. A film has a bigger budget to play with which a TV drama does not. Another difference is in terms of acting. Since dramas are so tightly packed, any mistakes you make in your acting gets concealed because of the tightly packed story and scenes, but that does not happen in movies. Because each scene is expanded and the story can accommodate more shots, any mistakes you make in acting in a film is heavily exposed. Another difference is the shelf life of a movie. A movie, whether good or bad, remains as a record that people are unlikely to forget easily. That is not the case with a television drama. In short, one movie is worth ten dramas - at least that's the way I see it.

Why do you think we are losing our television audience to foreign channels and programs?

Simple. Our quality is not up to the mark. Sure, we have tons of channels and tons of programs. But unfortunately, the tons of programs didn't bring tons of quality. It's not like we have a shortage of actors, actresses or directors. Only when we start focusing on quality rather than quantity will we see our audiences watching our own programs again.

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