



Brave & beautiful Shimla



What extent can someone go to chasing their dreams? Shimla, one of the most promising actresses of Bangla cinema, made her way from a small town of Jhinaidah to Dhallywood and fulfilled her long cherished dream. Shimla started her career at a very young age. In 1999 she left home with the dream of becoming an actress. That same year, she got the opportunity to act with director Shahidul Islam Khokon in his film "Madam Fuli", which was considered a big hit that year and from that point on, she never looked back. Shimla is one of those few actresses who won the National Film Award for their first film.

After this huge success, she got casted in more than forty films like- "Boma Hamla", "Hasan Raja", "Na Bolo Naa", "Dhawa" etc. Some of those were commercially successful, and some weren't. Now though, after sixteen years of "Madam Fuli", a sequel dubbed "Madam Fuli 2" is going to be made under Ashiqur Rahman Ashiq's direction and screenplay and Shimla is being cast in "Madam Fuli 2" as the protagonist. Was her journey as exciting as it sounds? What are the difficulties she faced being a woman in a conservative society? We at Star Showbiz sat down in conversation with this national award winning actress to find out more about the new film as well as her life as an actress.

MADAM FULI 2

"Madam Fuli 2" is based on a complete new story, which has relevance with the original 'Madam Fuli'. That film was about the journey of a village girl Fuli to become the titular Madam Fuli. In "Madam Fuli 2", the story kicks off with Fuli's family. The story vividly portrays the difficulties Fuli faced throughout her life and the ordeals she had overcome and the choices Fuli had to make.

WHY DO YOU THINK "MADAM FULI 2" IS BEING MADE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?

Both here and abroad, people still know me as "Madam Fuli". So you can imagine how much the audience loved her. After 1999, we were already thinking of making a sequel. However, the industry was in a bit of disarray around 2001-02, and so we decided to postpone the idea.

HOW WOULD AUDIENCES REACT TO THE SEQUEL AFTER 16 YEARS?

We are keeping all kind of audiences in mind as we make "Madam Fuli 2". There will be some background ideas about Fuli's life in the beginning so as to bring audiences up to speed. So we are expecting that audiences are going to accept Fuli as they accepted the original.

WHAT MADE YOU REALIZE THAT YOU COULD BE A SUCCESSFUL ACTRESS?

I used to tell my family that I wanted to be a heroine, just like the ones in cinemas. But nobody ever took me seriously and thought it was a phase that I would get over. However, when I passed high school, I brought up the topic of becoming a movie actress to my brother. At first he tried to convince me by saying how hard it is for a girl to have a career in this arena, especially since I have no connections in this industry whatsoever. However, my confidence and dedication got through to him



somehow and he sent me to Dhaka.
IN TERMS OF ACTING WHOM DO YOU LOOK UP TO?
Without a doubt Shabana ma'am! She has always been my inspiration. Actually if it wasn't for Shabana ma'am, I don't think I could ever be an actress. Then there's Salman Shah and Moushumi. As I had no previous experience or training in acting, it was their films that helped me build my determination and interest for acting.

IS THE SCENARIO DIFFERENT NOW? DO YOU THINK THE NEWCOMERS HAVE AN EASIER TIME IN THIS CAREER AND HAVE SUPPORT OF THEIR FAMILIES?

Yes they are. I think parents are much more liberal now. And if you have the urge for acting and confidence within, then there is nothing wrong with a career in film.

DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS A FEMINIST BECAUSE MANY OF THE CHARACTERS YOU PLAY ARE STRONG AND EMPOWERING?

I think I am a humanist. As far as the characters are concerned, I always prefer doing performances in film that are a bit more unique.

WHAT OTHER PROJECTS ARE YOU CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN?

I have two movies that I am currently working on right now.

One is "Nishiddho Premer Golpo" directed by Rubel Siddique Anush and another one is "Nayok".

SO, WHEN WILL WE HEAR THE WEDDING BELLS RING?

I can't really say. One thing I do maintain however is that whomever I get married to has to be someone from outside the media industry. That is a place of work for me and I do not believe in getting involved in my workplace. But I would like to say that I would love to get married and would love to be a mother. When I do start a family, I will step back from the limelight and focus on behind the scene work such as directing, production, etc.

.....
Interviewed by Rafi Hossain
& Narrated by Tasneem Rubayat

