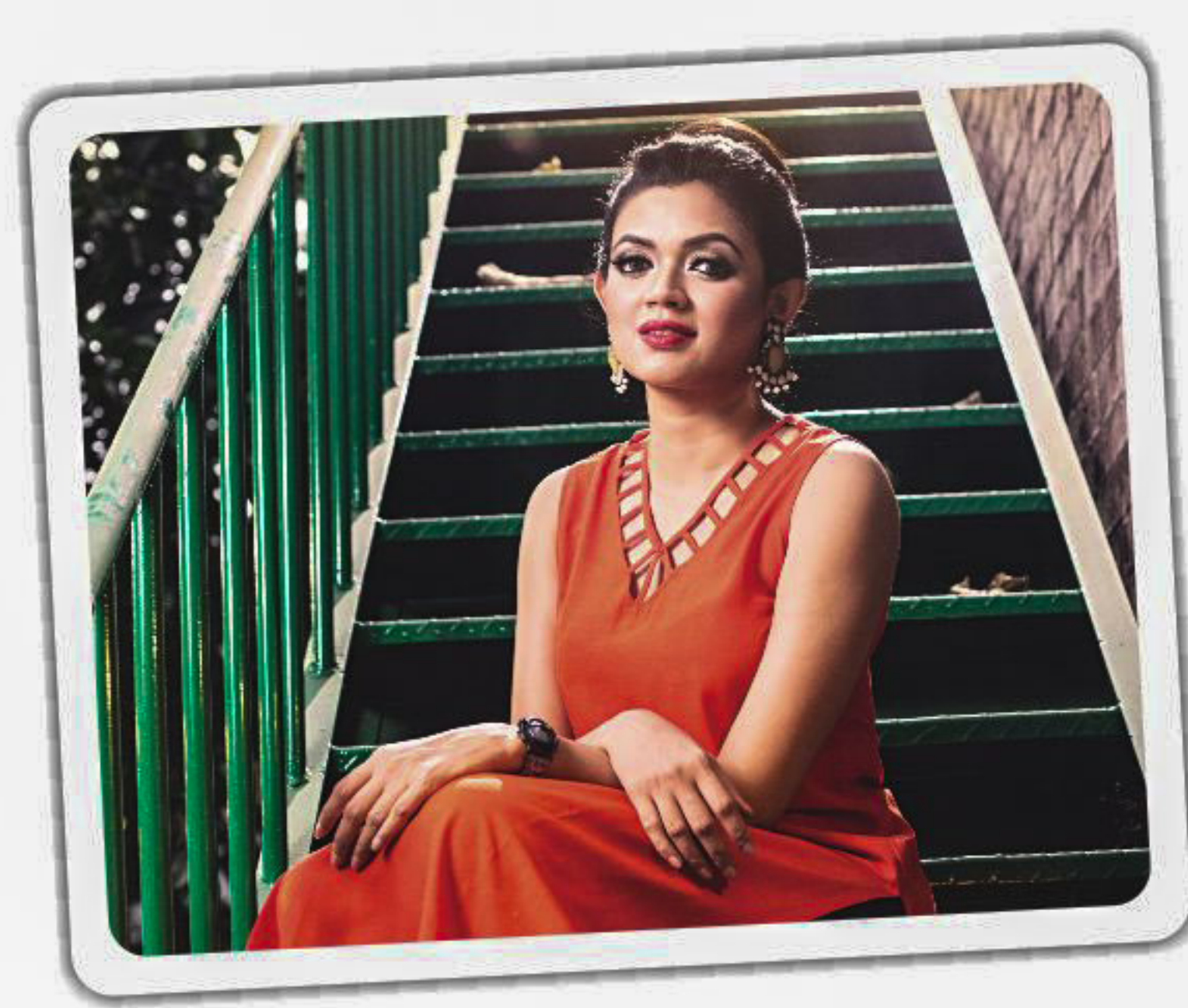




A REFLECTION *of* AYNABAJI

COVER STORY

From a young girl growing up in the Middle East, Nabila came back and started off her career as an anchor. From there she moved to hosting well-reputed corporate events, and later acting for one of the esteemed directors of Bangladesh. Even though she has established herself as 'the anchor of choice', she had no idea about the versatility of her lurking talents. With a character to play, who did not differ much from her real self, and boosted with the enthusiasm of Amitabh Reza, her story is definitely one worth sharing with the world.



Let's start with 'Aynabaji'. How did you first get involved with the film?
Last February I received a call from Amitabh bhai's assistant. I figured it would be for an advertisement. They summoned me to their office, and when I asked if it was for a TVC, they replied, to my surprise, that it was for a film. I was still in a daze, as a film is a huge responsibility. Earlier, I was offered many roles for films, but I refused over the phone. In this case, I felt I should go for an assessment, so I met Amitabh bhai, while he briefed me on the plot, and that was it. For a month we did not communicate, so I assumed they found someone else for the role, thus I did not worry. The very next day after the press conference, where Chanchal bhai was announced for his role, they called me up. Later they explained my character in detail, and wanted to know how keen I was for this role. I really enjoyed the plot, and my character was rather relevant to myself. Since my role did not demand a

typical "heroine" act, I felt I could play the role and had to accept such a fitting opportunity.
Why do you think you were selected for this role?
Not only me, but every character in this film was handpicked by Amitabh bhai, based on the fact that they could relate to their own self. It is not shown in the film, but every character has a background. In case of my role as Ridi, she was brought up in the Middle-East, and so was I. According to Amitabh bhai, those who grow up in the Middle East are not very progressive and they tend to have a bond with their motherland. Ridi has studied in English literature, and so did I. The personal crisis faced by Ridi, is also similar to what I have been through. Based on all that, I believe Amitabh bhai felt I could connect well with the character.
So did that work out? Did you feel connected to the character on set?
Very much so. At times there would be changes in

the scene, where I would suggest how Ridi would have reacted because that was the level of connection I had.
How was your preparation for the shoot?
It was rather good. I was asked to read a lot of books and watch a variety of cult films, which I would have not otherwise gone through. We even had a workshop on acting, mouth exercises and dialogue delivery to enhance our skills. We were also taken to the shooting locations prior to the shoot, so as to acquaint ourselves with the environment.
What would you say is the key attraction for a fan watching 'Aynabaji'?
It is a very unique story. It is the primary reason I agreed to act in this film. It revolves around the character, Ayna, who is an actor residing in Old Dhaka; running a theatre with a strong passion towards acting, which lands him in situations which bring out the darker sides of life in the city.
How did you feel shooting for the big screen?

How was the first shoot like?
It was quite unnerving. The first scene was the first time Ridi goes to Ayna's place. Obviously it was not what Amitabh bhai was expecting, so he took his time and explained my faults, after which we did a re-take and then he seemed happy. My confidence was boosted every time Amitabh bhai commented "Superb!" on a certain scene, and it gave me the energy to keep trying to better my skills.
What have you sacrificed for the opportunity of shooting this film?
I wouldn't say I made sacrifices, rather they were adjustments. For the three months that I was shooting, I did it with full concentration, so I did not get involved with anything else. Since I was already shooting for 'Five Female Friends', I had to go for that. Other than that, I was mostly submerged with 'Aynabaji'.
If this film is a success, how will we see Nabila in the near future?

I do not see myself in films to be honest. The reason I did this was because I could relate to the character in so many ways, the team had an amazing understanding with each other and the role was very intriguing. If sometime in the future, all these are met, then I may go for my next film.
You have come a long way, from growing up in the Middle-East to acting in a film in Dhaka. How challenging was your journey?
Actually it was not very challenging because I started off with hosting somewhat simplistic and non-glamorous TV shows. The pace was rather slow and steady. Gradually, it had led to corporate shows and big events, and now cinema. I'm thankful to all my colleagues, friends, family and fans, and hope there are bigger, better things waiting for me in the future.

Interviewed by Minam Haque

