



Wardrobe: Model's Personal



BITOPI DAS CHOWDHURY HEADING COMPANIES FORWARD

There aren't many people in the capital who haven't heard of Bitopi Das Chowdhury, Country Head of Corporate Affairs, Standard Chartered Bank Bangladesh. She is the perfect example of a 21st century working woman, operating equitably as any other male colleague in her profession. She is an icon to the women of Bangladesh, stressing their empowerment and dispensation with her successful career progression.

Beautiful and age-less, we asked her how she liked to be complimented. "Honestly, I'd prefer anything that does not refer to one's age because it presupposes a dialogue that is entirely irrelevant to me".

We carried on our conversations regarding the numerous ways women had to battle with the ageing process and what her thoughts were about it. "I see many marketing campaigns selling the concepts of 'looking younger' helping to create demand and preying on women's insecurities. While it is important to take care of oneself, we should concede that ageing is a natural phenomenon; and hence it is best to 'age gracefully'".

We provided Bitopi Chowdhury with the following lines: "There is not much we can do about our age, but we can surely face it with a kick-ass attitude"; and asked her thoughts regarding these lines. "I fully concur with the sentiment expressed in this phrase. The concept of hiding or claiming a lower-than-actual age is quite outdated."

Personally, I believe it is important to feel comfortable with the way one is, and making the best out of it. Once this is achieved, you'll look and feel confident and totally at ease; this is a vital ingredient to being happy and carrying oneself gracefully."

With her immense experience in the professional world we had to ask her the hindrances related to age. "Mid and senior level jobs require a certain level of maturity and experience. But someone 'young' can also achieve these, with a good performance record. Entry level jobs sometimes have an upper age limit, so age can be an

issue there. Apart from these, age should not be a factor in professional growth or getting a job".

To a classy lady like Bitopi Chowdhury, we asked what it meant to be sophisticated. "To me, sophistication is timeless. Class and elegance is never an outcome of someone being older; but the combined outcome of many things put together; it's the way you treat others, your manners, it's the way you talk and the language you use, and the way you respect yourself and others."

SUBORNA MUSTAFA THE AGE-LESS BEAUTY

Construing Suborna Mustafa is very easy. The words that come to mind are class, elegance and versatility. She is an enigma, who conquered the Bangladeshi TV and Film industry with her formidable acting and mystifying beauty that only burgeons with time. Suborna Mustafa is the perfect example of an 'ageless-beauty' and hence a suitable candidate for breaking down any social stigmas related to aging.

The perennial beauty believes that chasing youth is an endless game. "For me, personally, the quality of life regardless of my age is very important. I would never be silly enough to chase 'youth' per se." When inquired, whether she faced any social stigma in her professional life, the prima-donna smiled briefly. "While performing, I have always tried to act my age. My perception with 'aging' is that it is a very natural process and we should never try to deny it. Maturity is synonymous to aging and the laugh lines or wrinkles that we get as the years pass by, are only endowments of sanguine and graceful ageing."

"When I look into the mirror, I can be 16 again", these words may mean different things to different people but to Suborna Mustafa it only means being proud of her youth and commemorating the good work that she has been a part of. "I had performed in 'Guddi' when I was 16 and I feel gratified about my work and the confidence I showed at such a young age".

Our next question was about the media and how it was constantly bombarding everyone

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with a pre-conceived notion of beauty where everyone had to look petite, polished and young. The actress nodded her head in disapproval, "When a viewer sits in front of the TV, they expect to see a presentable face and there's nothing wrong with it. This does not mean the actors and actresses have to be under a constant pressure to hide their wrinkles. They can take good care of their skin and feel good wearing it. This kind of confidence shows on-screen and that's all the viewers are expecting".

We ended the tête-à-tête with the main question of why women never revealed their true age. "I think it has more to do with the chauvinistic culture and the existent social bias. There is an age-old proverb that says 'Kuritei Buri' and women have been conditioned through the ages by lines such as these. However, the times have changed significantly and people think very differently now. Age does not matter anymore and the awkwardness has reduced largely".

KHUSHI KABIR REFINED, CONFIDENT AND COURAGEOUS

From fighting on behalf of marginalised communities, steering committees, chairing citizen forums and groups, you name it, she has done it all. This extraordinary lady, that we know as Khushi Kabir, has contributed massively in favour of the well-being of Bangladesh. With time, she has only become more refined and assertive. This woman of tremendous substance is one of our candidates exemplifying the term 'age-less' beauty.

A proud citizen of the nation, bearer of the torch for women's rights, fighter against fundamentalism, Khushi Kabir never gave a moment's thought to aging. "Ageing is just a number for me. I don't even know what people mean when they say 'You have aged well!' I have always felt like the way I should and age had nothing to do with it".

We asked Khushi Kabir what she thought about the constant pressure by media, 'to look petite, polished and young'. She confidently replied, "Advertisements will always be there; nothing new to it. Be smart! Don't fall into the trap of consumerism. Be wise enough to choose for yourself. Remember to be comfortable in everything you apply and wear. That's what matters. What others think doesn't matter at all."

"Women usually don't want to reveal their true age", when asked what these lines meant to Khushi Kabir she laughed and said "I never had that problem and I never understood the psy-

chology behind it. My age only gives me pride. When I was really young, I went to the remotest parts of our country and worked all alone. Age didn't hamper my well-being then. Similarly today, after so many years of work and contributions, age still does not matter to me".

We just had to ask her what she thought about people who were constantly trying to chase their lost youth. "Well, I have many friends who are much younger to me but are tremendously matured. Then there are some who probably have aged chronologically but have lower maturity than the former. This proves that the matter at hand is overplayed and physical changes have no value in how the mind thinks. As for chasing the youth, I'd say that's very foolish. I'd rather try to gain more experience and knowledge and that's only possible with time and hence the advancement of age."

Inquired what Khushi Kabir looked towards after having years of successful work and major accomplishments, she brimmed with happiness, "I am ecstatically looking towards my 70s, having completed my 50s and almost done with my 60s; my plan is to take life as it comes".

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