

CENTRE STAGE

MUNIA ISLAM

Talented young actor, model and anchor, Munia Islam has won the hearts of many with her movies and TV dramas. Her acting prowess has made her one of the personas on the silver screen to look out for. In a candid interview with Star Showbiz, she talked about her life and shared some of her experiences.

Tell us something about yourself.

I'm an actor and an anchor. I've been in the media for a while now. When I was in first grade, my parents made me take music and dance classes. I then did recitation and acting as a child artist. I took a break afterwards. When I was done with HSC and starting university, I felt like I'd be happy if I just got to see my photo in a newspaper because, during the break, I had lost connections from anyone from the media fraternity. So, I started doing photoshoots and TV commercials. My first TVC was for BSRM, then for Dabur Network. I also did TVCs for Bloop on four of their launches. I started individual projects in 2011. In 2012, I started acting; *Ognipath* being my first drama. It was a mega-serial by Nima Rahman, new episodes coming six days a week. After that, I did many dramas, but there are some people who still know me as my character in *Ognipath*. People used to watch a lot of dramas during that time. I played in many dramas after that, but the movie *Swapnajaal* by Giasuddin Selim, where I acted alongside Iresh Zaker, has taught me a lot about acting.

Did you take formal lessons in acting or theatre?

Like I've said before, I have been acting since childhood, especially children's stage drama in *People's Theatre*. When I started doing this professionally on TV, my elders helped me a lot. I'm lucky to have been able to work with talented people. Tariq Anam Khan and Nima Rahman assisted me greatly as I had started with their productions. I learnt by working. I'm doing Afzal Hossain's *Choto Kaku* series and every year before Eid, the whole team goes to tours on different places. He's an extreme perfectionist. We have to do a lot of rehearsals and redo the scenes to perfection. That's how I learnt about acting.

Before doing Selim sir's movie, I used to play only one type of role. I was only called for portraying the role of city girls. Maybe, they thought I'd be unable to do it. After acting in *Swapnajaal*, I was heavily praised for my acting. Even senior artists asked me how I was able to pull such a complicated character off, with my age and level of experience.

Do you prefer acting or modelling or doing TVCs?

Acting is my passion. I am an only child and when I was little, I used to play alone. I used to pretend to be different characters. That's where the passion came from and I fell in love with the art.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I can see myself doing movies. I've already acted in a movie and I feel like I should do more, maybe different sort of films. I just want to step out of the mainstream genre.

Tell us about your inspirations.

If we're talking about Bangladesh, I'd say Jaya Ahsan and Runa Khan. I love their work very much. However, my idol is Priyanka Chopra. I am a huge fan of her, and aspire to be like her.

Do you have any upcoming projects that we should be looking out for?

Yes, definitely. One month ago, I got selected by a theatre group for a play for which, they're going to *Kolkata International Fest* on 1st and 2nd February. This is a huge achievement for me because performing in Kolkata is like a dream come true. I visited Kolkata recently and people were telling me how there will be a fest soon and I should come check it out. In the back of my mind, I was thinking about how great it would be if I could perform there. I knew it would be impossible, because who would select me? When I was asked to perform in the play and represent Bangladesh, I agreed immediately. I'm just extremely thrilled about being able to perform in Kolkata's stage as a Bangladeshi and being able to see the audience's reaction.

Do you have any advice for aspiring actors?

Honestly, I'm still learning now. I don't know if I'm experienced enough to give any tips. If I have to say something, it will be, "Only concentrate on yourself." We're always competing with others and if we keep doing so, we won't be able to concentrate on our own qualities. My mother once told me, "If you go up with a lift, come down with a lift as well. If you go up using stairs, come down using stairs as well." I work very hard and make sure I maintain the quality of my work. I think we should compete with ourselves, so that we can identify our flaws and make ourselves better.

Do you have any special message for the readers?

I would appreciate it if all of you kept me in your prayers so that I can flourish successfully in the industry. Thank you so much.

By Amina Hossain

