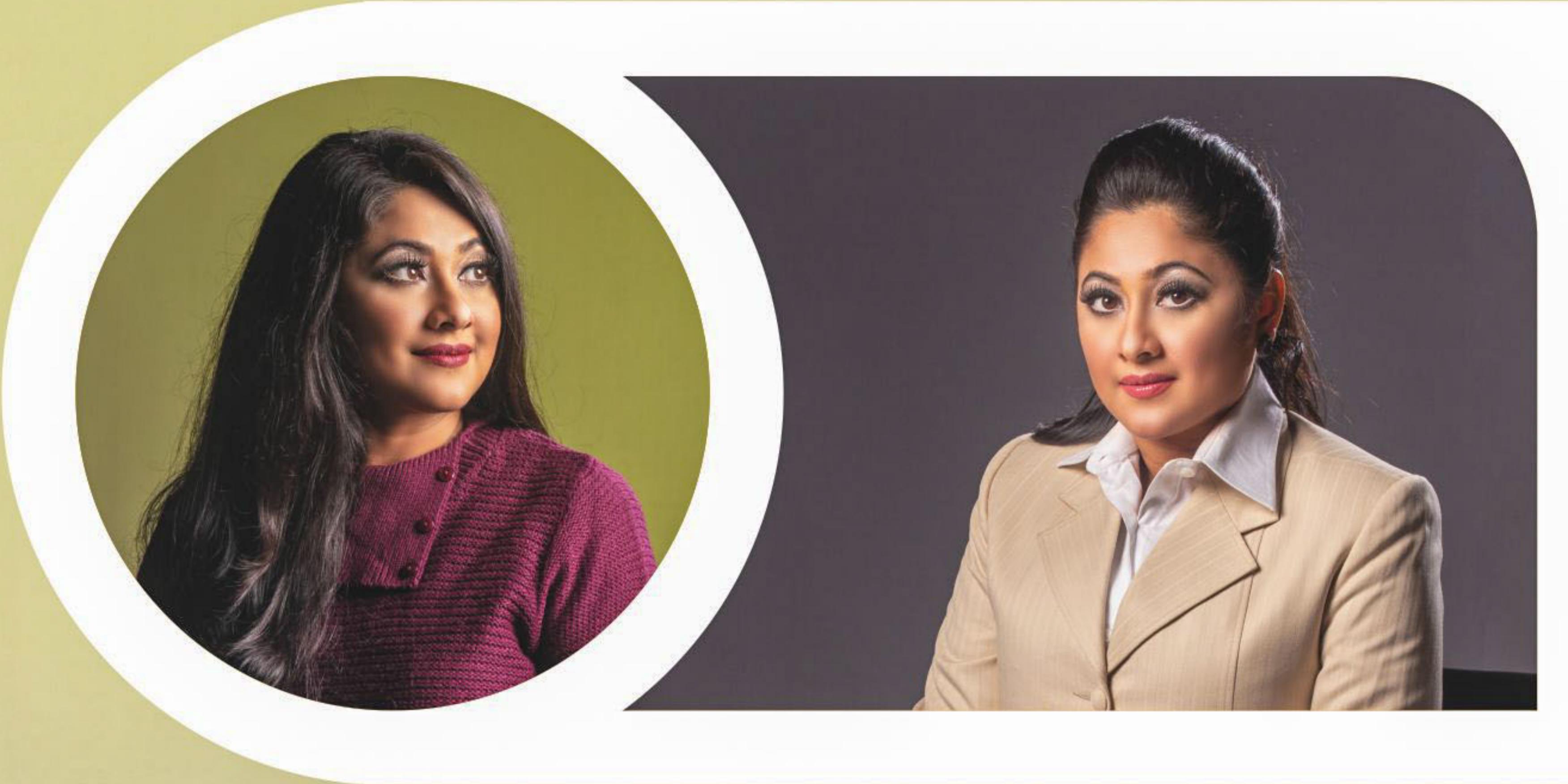


FIGHT FOR A *Better Future*



|| COVER STORY ||

RAFI HOSSAIN: Welcome to *Uncensored* with Rafi Hossain. Today we have with us, Sumaiya Shimu. Thank you for giving us your time.

SUMAIYA SHIMU: Thank you for having me. My greetings go out to the readers as well.

RAFI: We've heard that you have started a new venture, 'Better Future for Women'. Tell us something about it.

SUMAIYA: The project is quite new. We started it on March 8, *International Women's Day*. The name of the project says it all. I want the women of our country and the world to have a better future. I always wanted to do something like this.

I've been acting for around nineteen years now, and my viewers have undoubtedly noticed that I work on projects which deal with issues women have to face regularly. I have acted in different genres, but I always try to choose scripts which deliver positive messages. I feel that as an actor, I owe this to society. Throughout my acting career, to depict the characters as authentically as possible, I had to meet many women. We talked about their lives, their issues. I wanted to not only portray their problems on screen, but do something practical as well. Consequently, this venture came to life.

RAFI: On which subject did you finish your PhD, and what is the reason behind choosing it?

SUMAIYA: My subject was the role of women in teleplay, who undertake projects depicting art and the socioeconomic realities of Bangladesh. The reason behind choosing this subject is my love for acting. My teacher advised me to choose a subject which I would like and feel comfortable working on. He also told me that as I'm an actor, I would know the ins and outs of the subject better than an outsider. The other reason was that we don't have much research on this topic. When I had to collect data and evidence, I struggled a lot as there wasn't much out there in Bangladeshi television dramas. I felt that this would be a start, at the least.

RAFI: Do you think women these days are being exploited in the entertainment industry?

SUMAIYA: There are advantages and disadvantages of every industry. I haven't been the victim of any exploitation as of yet, but there may be the scope of exploitation evident in this industry. However, nothing too extreme happens, I believe.

RAFI: Why do you think some women are being exploited?

SUMAIYA: Such things shouldn't be happening in the first place. I feel that the women in this industry are extremely bold. In the past, if a girl wanted to be an

actor, she would face criticism from her family and the society. So, women had to have guts. That's why I feel that they can protect themselves from being exploited. There's no question that some people do exist with bad intentions, and some girls are taken advantage of, but there hasn't been a big incident.

RAFI: As the media progresses, many talented and knowledgeable individuals will join. They will have to be bold about this. What are your thoughts?

SUMAIYA: The people now are already bold. I am very hopeful for our future. Careers in the media line will quickly become extremely alluring.

RAFI: I have heard that many actors can't find projects. What is the reason behind this?

SUMAIYA: This saddens me. I don't know the reason, if I'm being honest. The people who are related with casting can answer this properly. An actor's main job is to prepare themselves for acting and grow as an actor. The producers and directors should make use of this. The scripts also have to be written in such a way so as to suit an actor's preference.

RAFI: Are you satisfied with your work and how far you've come?

SUMAIYA: A sense of fulfillment will persist until the day I die, and I want it to stay as such because it will drive me to do better. The excitement I felt when I received my first script is still prevalent

now when I receive calls for acting or get new scripts for projects.

RAFI: Why didn't you act in films?

SUMAIYA: I have received a lot of offers for mainstream films, but I didn't believe I'm fit for that. I don't think such films will suit my acting. Moreover, my family also didn't want me to act in films. However, many new films are being made which are acting and story based. If I get offers for films which appeal to me, I'll definitely agree. Perhaps, I won't act in commercial films because my audience are not used to seeing me in that setting, and might not accept me. I don't want to take the risk.

RAFI: Do you have any future plans?

SUMAIYA: I wanted to start teaching in the past, but that might not happen now. I will always act, as both the audience and I, love it. I want to do projects similar to *Better Future for Women*, in the future.

RAFI: Do you have any special message for the readers?

SUMAIYA: I'm very lucky to have received your love and adoration over the years. I have never considered another professional track, because of all this love. I'm extremely grateful for that. Thank you.

.....
Transcribed by Amina Hossain
Makeup: Farzana Munni, Quebella

