

# Sharmila BasuThakur — the legend

Working with lifestyle journalism for over five years now, I believe I can confess to falling in love with the entire set-up. Some may abruptly brush off this special sort of reporting as laid-back, all about fluff and fleeting, but I contend to reason otherwise.

Personally, to me lifestyle journalism is much more than just fashion, styling and beauty. It includes variety of content such as health issues, legal concerns, travelogues and so much more. So, when Sharmila BasuThakur, one of the ex-editors of the long standing and popular Opar Bangla magazine Sananda, agreed to my ideology, I was ecstatic.

If that was not enough, when she agreed for a rendezvous to share her experiences as an editor of one of the most popular lifestyle magazines in South East Asia, I was almost over the moon with gratification.

Here we'd try to share bits and pieces of Sharmila BasuThakur's tête-à-tête with Star Lifestyle.



According to Thakur, journalism is a profession where individuals grow every day. She continues the conversation by saying that reporting on a daily basis helped her look at the world in a different light; one that was more vibrant and closer to the truth.

Sananda, being a popular name in many a household both in West Bengal and Bangladesh, needed to capture the pulse of its readers, and from the legendary Aparna Sen to Sharmila BasuThakur, all achieved success and admiration with a flair that was inimitable. So, it was almost customary to ask BasuThakur, "How did it feel to work at Sananda?"

Her voice resonated with pride. "It is an esteemed magazine from a huge publishing house. Infrastructural and organisational support was always there, helping to perfect my dreams as an editor. I always tried to keep the magazine a class apart, whether it was with story selections, photo shoots,



photo selections or everything else. One should always have an eye for good things, especially if one is entrusted with the very important duty of an editor. Planning is a necessary condition for a successful issue. I tried to maintain all these things in a timely manner," she explained.

Speaking more on her experience in journalism and all the elements involved, she said, "Journalism is full of challenges and is dynamic. Every day is a new day, and that is the charm of this profession. And the most enjoyable part of the profession is that it gives us the opportunity to mingle with different types of people and personalities," elaborates BasuThakur.

Deeper into our conversation, she confessed to enjoying her time as a retired person, "Frankly speaking, I don't believe in retirement," she said. "Every phase of life has a stipulated time frame, but it goes on like a stream. So, I am busy with my various ventures like cooking, being an Odissi dancer and owner of an apparel label called Cottonwala. The only difference that I have today is that I don't need to follow a 'ten to seven' routine, which I extremely enjoy," she said.

The famed ex-editor of Sananda visited Bangladesh just a few months ago, as a judge for a cooking contest. Cooking comes second nature to her, she said, adding, "I think it's in my genes. Both my mother and my grandmother were brilliant cooks. I love to experiment with seasonal and fresh ingredients, just like they did, and I love to feed people," she confessed.

To pay respect to the multi-talented journalist and her road to discover a second passion, we share few of her recipes here, and hope the readers will enjoy the future recipes from our talented multitasking doyenne of lifestyle journalism.

## GANDHORAJ RICE

### Ingredients

200g Gobindobhog, or basmati rice  
400g sweet curd



1 tsp finely chopped ginger  
1 tbsp raisins  
Salt to taste  
2 green chilli  
2-3 tbsp Gandhoraj lime juice  
½ tsp Gandhoraj lemon rind  
3-4 Gandhoraj leaf  
2 tbsp oil  
Water, as required

### Method

Wash and dry the rice. Beat the curd and keep aside. Put oil in the pan. Add ginger, stir, add rice. Cook for few minutes, then add water, curd, salt, and stir, add raisins and cover it.

Cook on low heat. When water has evaporated and the rice is soft, remove from heat.

Add lemon juice, lemon rind, and leaves. Cover for few minutes and serve.

Extremely refreshing for summer.



## FISH CURRY WITH BABY TURMERIC

### Ingredients

500g rui or katla fish  
½ tsp turmeric powder  
1 tsp red chilli powder  
1 medium size baby turmeric  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 tsp ginger paste  
Salt to taste  
A pinch of sugar  
2 green chilli  
Mustard oil as required

### Method

Wash fish pieces and marinate with salt and turmeric for 10 minutes. Fry the fish pieces and keep aside. Slice baby turmeric in round pieces. Mix turmeric powder, chilli powder and ginger paste with water.

Heat oil in a pan and add onion, stirring until it becomes transparent. Now add the powdered spices mixed with water and cook over low heat. When oil gets separated from the spices, add water, salt and sugar.

Let it boil, add fish and cover. When gravy becomes a little thicker, add baby turmeric pieces and green chilli. Remove from heat and serve with plain rice.

## INDIAN GOOSEBERRY AND AMSATTO CHATNI (amlai amsatto chatni)

### Ingredients

3-4 amlaki/amla/gooseberry  
150g amsatto, small bar  
3-4 green chilli  
½ tsp grated ginger  
Salt to taste

### Method

Lightly blanch amla and remove it from water. Burn green chillies on direct flame. Mix all ingredients, except ginger. Pour the mixture in a bowl, add ginger and mix nicely.

It goes well with fritters and parathas. Can be kept in the fridge for a week.

Interview by Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury

Recipe: Sharmila BasuThakur

Photo: Somnath Roy