

# Judge me by my work, not my colour: Samira Khan Mahi

SHARMIN JOYA



Recently, a video of popular small-screen actress Samira Khan Mahi went viral on the Internet. In the video, Samira is seen in a casual black outfit without make-up. The video has prompted many to make harsh comments about her skin colour. However, the actress herself has addressed the issue on her social handle as well.

**“Many of us are still stuck with medieval thoughts and perceptions. Personally, I have always been evaluated for my work. Now, where I stand in my career, there is also a lot of effort, struggle, and hard work.”**

The Daily Star reached out to the actress to find out what actually happened that day, and how the video went viral online.

Samira was shooting for 12 days without break on a project, rendering her utterly exhausted. “Our call time was early in the morning, and I just went to the set casually like I always do,” she shared. “I never wear make-up if I’m not appearing in front of a camera, so I was bare-faced when one of my co-artists made a video. Initially, I thought she was making a ‘reel’, and I consciously covered my face as I didn’t want to appear on the video.”

Many also criticised her unwillingness to show her face without make-up. “I covered my face not because I wasn’t confident, but due to my exhaustion – I was not comfortable facing the camera. Also, I didn’t consent to it.” She mentioned that it is a common practice for artists to make reels or videos on the set to post on social media.

A day later, the video was uploaded by her colleague, and it had already gone viral on the Internet, where people were making harsh comments about her skin tone. “That was really shocking for me, as I have come this far with my work, and people who have showered their love and appreciation were making fun of my skin tone. They commented, ‘She is dark-skinned, she is not beautiful.’” Samira asserted

confidently that her skin texture is tanned, and she is confident about it. “I have faced this since my childhood. However, after working in this industry, I haven’t come across this kind of incident before. A few months ago, I was trolled for my teeth. It is funny and sad at the same time that even in 2024, we have to deal with such things.”

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After the video went viral, Moutushi Biswas and Shihab Shaheen, amongst other celebrities, stood up for Samira. Although the original video was removed from the source, it still kept circulating on the Internet. “My co-artist apologised for the incident, and explained that she didn’t think this would go south this way. However, the damage was already done!”

Samira feels happy that the showbiz industry is speaking up on the issue. “We have so many TVCs and telefilms that shed light on the fact that shaming and commenting on skin colour is not an appropriate practice. However, I believe that it will take time, and the mindset will definitely change someday.”

The actress further added that she wants to be judged by her work and not appearance.

“I feel uncomfortable about people making such trolls about skin colour, even though, only a few people do it. A person, an actress, should be judged by nothing but her work. Criticise my work and I’ll accept it. I’ll work harder on myself. But you only define yourself when you criticise someone for skin colour. I am and will keep working for the audience and their love.”

Samira is currently occupied with quite a number of small-screen projects, scheduled to be released this Valentine’s Day, pairing with actors like Musfiq R Farhan and Khairul Basar.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF SAMIRA KHAN MAHI



## Farooki returns home from hospital

Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, who suffered a mild brain stroke on January 22, has made a swift recovery, bringing relief to his well-wishers. Earlier, his wife Nusrat Imrose Tisha shared an update stating Farooki was under supervision at the Neuro ICU and needed rest for proper recovery.

The latest update came from Farooki’s verified Facebook account, where Tisha informed the public that the filmmaker has returned home.

The post reads, “On January 29, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki had a city scan. Alhamdulillah, the report from the CT scan is good, and he is recovering rapidly. He has been enjoying and playing with Ilham at home since his return.”

## Bob Marley biopic brings his message to new generations, son says

Bob Marley’s family hopes a new biographical movie about the superstar singer, titled *Bob Marley: One Love*, will help revive his legacy.

The film is produced by his wife Rita Marley and their children Ziggy and Cedella and executive produced by Brad Pitt. Directed by Reinaldo Marcus Green, it sees British actors Kingsley Ben-Adir and Lashana Lynch taking on the challenge of bringing Bob and Rita Marley to life on the screen.

“(It was made) mainly to spread his message more, to put his message into a different medium; film, to reach another generation. ‘One love’ is something positive out there in the world,” said Ziggy Marley.



# COUNTRYWIDE

## Boro on 140 bighas goes under water

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Around 220 bighas of low-lying land around the Burulia Beel in Jashore’s Keshabpur upazila have gone under water after the earthen fence of a fish enclosure collapsed due to heavy pressure of water.

Local farmers said the incident occurred when the earthen fence of one Mejba Uddin Milton’s fish enclosure collapsed on Sunday night, inundating 220 bighas of land including Boro saplings on around 140 bighas.

As a result, many farmers, who depend on Boro farming, suffered a huge loss.

Moreover, Boro plantation on vast tracts of land along the Beel area has become uncertain this season, they said. A number of farmers from different villages under Sufalakathi union said they drained out the stagnant water from their low-lying land to the Burulia Beel, aiming to cultivate Boro paddy.

But suddenly one of the earthen fences of a fish enclosure owned by Milton washed away and flooded the adjacent Boro fields as the enclosure, erected in the middle of the canal, was obstructing the natural flow of the water for long.

Farmer Nazmul Hossain of Sarutia village said Boro paddy on his three and a half bighas land has gone under water after the earthen fence of Milton’s fish enclosure washed away on Sunday.

Another Israfil Hossain of Kalagachhi village said all his 12 acres of land in the Beel area, prepared for Boro cultivation, have been flooded due to collapse of the earthen fence.

Contacted, Mejba Uddin Milton, owner of the fish enclosure, said an earthen fence of his fish enclosure washed away and entered into the nearby croplands due to heavy pressure of water.

Apart from the damaged Boro fields, fishes worth Tk 10 lakh have also been washed away from his fish enclosure, Milton added.

### Many farmers along the Burulia Beel, who depend on Boro farming, suffered a huge loss.

Sufalakathi Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Monjur Rahman said a number of farmers in his union have suffered a huge loss as out of the inundated 220 bighas land Boro was planted on about 140 bighas.

Contacted, Jahangir Hossain, deputy assistant agriculture officer in Keshabpur, said paddy plants get completely damaged if the seedlings remain under water for three to four days.



Boro saplings on vast areas along the Burulia Beel in Jashore’s Keshabpur upazila remain inundated for the last few days. PHOTO: STAR

## Rohingyas to be taken back after removal of junta

FROM PAGE 12 and Governance (SIPG), North South University yesterday.

Since October this year, rebel groups have captured hundreds of military bases and towns, mostly in the regions bordering China, India, and Bangladesh.

Analysts say the deepening civil war in Myanmar is a matter of serious concern for Bangladesh, especially as over a million Rohingya are already sheltered by Bangladesh and there is more displacement taking place in the Rakhine State.

Also, the conflicting geopolitical interests of the global powers including the US, China, and India can make things even worse.

The NUG is a parallel government formed by the leaders of the National League of Democracy following the military coup in 2021.

Kyaw Zaw said the military over the decades never wanted any genuine repatriation of the Rohingyas.

“As we return to power, we will amend all discriminatory laws, including the 1982 Citizenship Law of Myanmar, to ensure justice and rights of all Myanmar people irrespective of ethnicity and religion,” Zaw said.

Asked about the differences in stances of various ethnic groups, he said the NUG will hold dialogues with all the groups and form a federal democracy in Myanmar.

Kyaw Zaw said the US’ BURMA Act meant to provide non-lethal support to Myanmar’s democracy. However, Myanmar should not be the subject of geopolitics.

M Sakhawat Hussain, senior fellow at the SIPG,

said the Rohingya crisis is exacerbating and turning into a regional security threat.

He said Bangladesh needs to have a policy on how to deal with the issues emanating from the evolving situation in Myanmar.

Raymond Kwun-Sun Lau, assistant professor at the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the NSU, said sanctions by the US and its European allies will not change the way the military junta acts in Myanmar.

China, which has large infrastructure projects in Myanmar, is making efforts

to keep Myanmar under its influence to secure Chinese interests in the region.

But Prof Shahidul Haque, senior fellow at the SIPG, said Myanmar is a more crucial neighbour for India as it is the only country that provides a geographical connection to the ASEAN countries via land.

“So, India wants to enhance its relations with Myanmar,” he said.

Mahbubul Haque of Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia, also spoke at the event moderated by Prof Sk Tawfique M Haque, director of the Centre for Peace Studies at the SIPG.

## Curtain lifts on Ekushey Boi Mela

FROM PAGE 12 committee, said, “Compared to the last edition, this year’s fair brings some structural changes, like the outer pathways that were adjusted around the metro rail station.”

The fair will also include a Children’s Square, which has been relocated near the Ramna Kali Mandir gate, and the Little Magazine Corner, which has been moved to an open space near the stage in Suhrawardy Udyan, he added.

In terms of security, over 300 closed-circuit cameras have been installed in and around the venue.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Habibur Rahman, after inspecting the security protocols, said, “The book fair is a secular event. This arrangement has faced threats several times before. There were past incidents of sabotage and militant activities. The overall security plan has been designed keeping all

## Gaza faces

FROM PAGE 12 primarily children and women, live in constant fear and anxiety”, it said.

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip said any ceasefire agreement must end the offensive and allow them back into homes they abandoned as Israeli forces advanced.

“We are exhausted. We

## Dispute over money led to triple murder

FROM PAGE 12 lakh to Bikash.

The SP said Rajib initially intended to kill only Bikash.

“However, since Bikash wasn’t home, he killed Swarna and Paromita first. When Bikash returned home after just 10 minutes, Rajib killed him too.”

Rajib, in his confession, said he committed the murder because Bikash pressured him to repay the loan, claimed the official.

Rajib was presented before a court yesterday evening for the official recording of his confession.

## Four officials to be sacked over Tk 13.96cr graft

FROM PAGE 12 other aspects, the final decision has been made to dismiss the officials, said the letters, signed by Deputy Secretary Md Rabiul Islam of the youth and sports ministry.

As the PSC appoints the first and second class officers, seeking its advice on firing is a procedural requirement,

DYD officials said. They said the PSC usually gives advice in line with the ministry’s decision, but the accused officials are trying to influence the commission by different means so that it advises in their favour.

The officials said the process of taking punitive actions against four other

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