

It's not often we come across people who inspire hope and courage in us. And amongst the usual suspects like critics, cynics, pessimists and what have you who make the world seem grim and bleak, life brings forward remarkable individuals who not only challenge the way we lead our lives but encourage us to live it fully, embrace every moment.

SUMAYA KHAN

A beacon of hope



Sumaya Khan is one such force — unafraid, unapologetic, and unstoppable. Her journey is not just one of survival, but of purpose, passion, and perseverance.

As a trained lawyer, Khan taught the subject at a reputed university for nearly a decade, alongside following her passion for fashion design. "Sumaya Khan Makeover Studio" is a favourite among the well-heeled in Dhaka city. As if that is not proof of her prowess, she also runs a successful catering business called Khan Shaheba and Co., which serves the finest of South Asian cuisine to gourmands of Dhaka.

Sumaya Khan's fashion label — Sumaya Khan Couture — started in 2019, right before COVID. Enamoured by the classic style of the women in her family, her aesthetic has always been timeless elegance.

Her mother remains her inspiration first and foremost, alongside her aunt, who always dressed in traditional yet chic outfits.

"In the late eighties and nineties, they would wear simple outfits that were so elegant yet rooted in tradition," she muses.

Some of us growing up in similar times instantly relate to her designs that take us back to those simple days when fashion wasn't dictated by the latest trends on social media but by tradition and culture.

In a city where there's a boutique house at every corner, labels like Sumaya Khan Couture are a breath of fresh air. She refers to the label as her baby.

"Designing has always been a passion for me," says Sumaya. Bored of the generic styles and designs that everyone else was wearing, she decided to create outfits for herself and a few close friends and family without any intention of going public with her collection.

"I created only fifty pieces for my very first collection, and we were sold out on the first day of the exhibition we held at home!" she excitedly recalls. And since there has been no looking back for the designer.

While she was juggling so many roles with aplomb, she was diagnosed with cancer that left her shaken. However, it could not crush her indomitable spirit. Sumaya fought cancer with grace and dignity and is a survivor who stands tall as a shining beacon of hope for us all to never give up, no matter what.

"I have never known how to stop. Cancer has definitely been an unexpected obstacle mid-journey, but I don't let it overwhelm me. Thanks to my experiences, I have learnt that life's trajectory is never linear and hence there will always be ups and downs. It is how we look at any circumstance that defines the final outcome.

"I have always been a fighter and will continue to be one. This is how I rewrite the pages of my personal diary. No sympathies necessary — I am a warrior and that's my story," says the high-spirited multitasker.

"I am thinking of expanding my catering business. I plan to go big with my label and also rejoin teaching — God, I miss teaching so much, and I have so many plans to fulfill!"

In a world that often demands that we choose one path, Sumaya Khan boldly walks many, each with conviction, creativity, and compassion.

Whether in the courtroom, the kitchen, or the atelier, she brings the same unyielding spirit that helped her triumph over adversity.

Her story is a reminder that passion, when paired with perseverance, can shape not only careers but also lives, and in doing so, light the way for others to follow.

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Sumaya Khan
Fashion Direction & Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Wardrobe: Sumaya Khan
Jewelry: 6 Yards Story
Makeup: Sumon Rahat & Team
Location: Santorini by IKitchen

