

Dhaka Day by Day

Whizzing Through The Clouds

by Fayza Haq

Yasmin Rahman lives in a flat called "Cockpit" in DOHS. It could not be more appropriate more than a decade back she could speak about her experiences as the first woman pilot from Bangladesh. Today she can talk about what it feels to be the only female airline pilot for the DC10 in Asia.

Yasmin is self effacing. "In USA there are quite a few pilots like me. In India there is an Airbus pilot and in Jordan there is a woman Tristar captain. Of course, I do have a tremendous sense of achievement to be able to do what I am doing," she comments.

What attracted her to aviation? "My elder brother used to fly in the flying club. He refused to take me for joy rides because I used to throw up. I was determined to go on my own. I took an aptitude test where I was no longer throwing up. The government, at that time, subsidised flying schemes. Three hundred of us took the exam, and 25 were selected. Every year 50 hours of the flying was paid at a subsidised rate of Tk 30 per hour, although by the time I finished it went to Tk 120 per hour. I worked as a student architect, and later as an architect and so on for my training. I also put in my scholarship money. I had begun in '75 and it took me three years to get the licence," she explains.

Was there ever an incident in her career that called for a tremendous amount of courage? Yasmin recounts an incident in '75. "I had to make a forced landing at Faridpur when I got partly lost. The fuel was finished and I was dropping off a flying club mechanic on my way back. This is the only dicey incident that I can remember."

Another challenging situation that she faced was during the floods of '88. "The runway was flooded and I was the first captain to take off from the taxi way. It is the path on the ground along which an aircraft comes and goes from the runway and its width is almost half of the width of the normal runway. Moreover, instead of 10,500 feet I had 7,000 feet to negotiate before taking off. The passengers cheered madly as I took off," she recalls.

Discussing the difference in flying a wide bodied plane and a smaller ones she says, "In the old days flying was adventurous and an exciting profession. Nowadays with modern technology it has become more of cockpit management and discipline. Flying and navigation has become computerised. It is much more technical. The wide-bodied aircraft is definitely more challenging and involves more technicalities."

Does she face any problems with the cabin crew or the passengers? Yasmin insists that the crew and fellow colleagues are always very cooperative and pleasant. "I have been a captain for three years," she recounts. "Some say when they see me 'If it's a woman who is the pilot I'd rather not fly'. This is what I heard initially. But after three years now there are passengers who would prefer to fly with me than with anyone else. Yes, I've had occasions of rowdy pas-

sengers, and those who hassle the cabin crew, but they can all be handled normally," she insists.

There are flights that are fairly long and not all that pleasant. How do they fly so many hours at a stretch and still keep their nerves steady? Yasmin explains, "Before we go on a flight we are fully rested. The average office worker must strive from nine to five, does he not? I admit our working hours are odd. We sometimes take off in the evening and land in the morning. We have enough rest before and after the long hours of flight to compensate for the time we stay awake. You have to keep cool and must have strong nerves. This comes in good use during an emergency. I've been flying for 16 years. It is now like a second nature. I admit it is a big responsibility to fly with a plane load of several hundred passengers."

"We get trained for all kinds of emergencies that might occur during a flight. Until now I have never faced any major emergencies," the confident pilot explains.

How does she feel at the end of a big flight-like some triumphant conqueror? Yasmin replies, "It's only on the first flight that you have a sense of achievement. Later it is simply a routine. Every flight is like another. My next aim is to be in command in the wide-bodied DC10."

She is a trained architect who qualified with a first class in '76. Has she kept up with her architectural skill? Before she joined Biman she worked for three years at Shahidullah Associates. After joining Biman she worked privately on a smaller scale. After the birth of her younger daughter and becoming a captain of F28 in '88 she had no time for architecture.

Yasmin says that she loves architecture. However since both are technical and demanding professions she had to decide which one she liked better. She found flying more challenging and abandoned her other passion.

The pilot who flies 40 hours per month on a minimum, loves her visits to Greece and Rome more than any other place. "I suppose it is the architect in me," she comments about herself. Among the modern cities she likes Singapore best as it is beautiful and clean. Like most people she takes delight in shopping in London too.

Does she find it easy to combine her domestic life with her career? Yasmin says, "It is rather demanding to be a mother and a working pilot but I have the support of my family, specially my mother, mother-in-law and my husband, which makes it easier for me than otherwise."

Did it ever cross her mind that she could some day be an astronaut? "In the context of Bangladesh it is too much to ask for in the recent future. Let us leave it for the next generation," she replies with a smile.

Mr Gaston Rebard has five children and not four as told in the story in Dhaka Day by Day, published on October 18.



Yasmin Rahman with husband and daughter: 'You have to keep cool and must have strong nerves'.

Guardians urge parties not to play politics with students

Jatiya Avibhabak Samity, and organisation of the guardians of the students studying in various educational institutions, on Tuesday made an appeal to the political parties not to play politics with the lives of their children, reports BSS.

In a joint statement, President and General Secretary respectively of Samity, Dr A M A Zaman and A K M Emdadul Huq appealed to the political parties not to support the terrorists who are causing uninterrupted violence and deaths in the educational institutions and also hampering academic atmosphere.

They requested all quarters to 'save Bangladesh from this type of violence' and reminded the political parties of their moral responsibility and obligation towards the people.

Private primary teachers to get Tk 500 each for UPE programme

Government has decided to sanction Tk 500 per month for each teacher of registered private primary school as a step towards implementation of universal primary education (UPE) programme in the country, reports UNB.

Education Minister Barrister Zamiruddin Sircar disclosed to the leaders of Bangladesh Private Primary School Teachers' Association at his office Tuesday.

The minister told the delegation that the primary school teachers would be involved in the process of implementation of compulsory primary education commencing next January.

He sought increased cooperation of the private primary school teachers for spreading education to the common mass through mass education programme.

Sircar lauded the role of the teachers in bringing about a qualitative change in the system of primary education in the country.

He further informed the members of the delegation that the present government is determined to make the education system people-oriented for improving the socio-economic condition of the mass.

President of the Private Primary School Teachers' Association Major (Retd) Asaduzzaman and Secretary General Moonsur Ali led the teachers team.

Land registration procedure to be made easy

Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz Tuesday stressed the need for building a society free from all sorts of corruption for sustaining peace and progress in the country, reports BSS.

He was addressing a review meeting of the Dhaka district Sub-registrars at the conference room of the Law and Justice ministry in Dhaka.

The State Minister for Law and Justice, Aminul Huq, also addressed the meeting.

The Law Minister said that the registration procedure of land and property would be made easy for greater benefit of the common people.

Ahmed Humayun made DG of Press Institute

Ahmed Humayun, Editor of the Dainik Bangla has been appointed Director-General of the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) on contract basis for two years, reports BSS.

According to an official handout Humayun took over charge of his new assignment Tuesday.

Wednesday

- 5.00 Opening announcement, Al Quran Programme summary
- 5.15 Reading from the Geeta
- 5.20 News in Bangla
- 5.30 Campus
- 6.00 Sports programme
- 6.30 Shamachar
- 7.05 Itizal Tamal : Songs programme
- 8.00 News in Bangla
- 8.30 News summary
- 9.00 Film show : MacGyver
- 10.00 News in English
- 10.25 Parliament Roundup
- 10.40 Shilpa and Shahitya
- 11.30 Khabar/The News
- 11.45 Close Down



Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the Parliament addressing the second national conference of Bangladesh Society of Neurosciences in city Tuesday.

Badruddoza's plea to set up a neuroscience institute

By Staff Correspondent

Deputy Leader of the Parliament, Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury on Tuesday stressed the importance of undertaking proper steps to provide adequate treatment for patients of nervous system disorders and head injuries in the country.

"We need to think about setting up an institute of neuroscience in the country as deaths resulting from head injuries in road accidents have increased and are likely to rise further in future," he said while speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural session of the second annual convention of the Bangladesh Society of Neurosciences at a local hotel.

Presided over by the President of the society Professor M A Mannan, Minister for Health and Family Planning, Choudhury Kamal Ibne Yousuf was the special guest. Health Secretary M

Mokammel Huq also attended the function.

Referring to the presence of only a handful of neurosurgeons and neurologists in the country to treat patients with neurological disorders, the Health Minister regretted that practical steps to deal with the problem could not be taken earlier because of financial constraints and also because of the indifferent attitude of the previous autocratic government.

Termining the number of operations conducted by such a small number of Neurosurgeons every year as "incredible", Choudhury Kamal Ibne Yousuf pledged all out help of the government in setting up an Institute of Neuroscience in the country.

Stressing the importance of a convention for improvement of the treatment of the patients of neurosurgery and the neurology in the country, the

General Secretary of the Society Professor Rashiduddin Ahmad called for appropriate and wide-ranging facilities for the treatment of such patients.

Referring to a Home Ministry statistics of the death of 17,492 persons due to road accidents during the last five years in the country, he said most of these deaths were from head injuries.

"In 1977, I myself conducted 87 operations during the year which increased to 245 in 1990," Professor Ahmad, a noted Neurosurgeon in the country, pointed out adding, "at present we, three Neurosurgeons together conduct over 600 operations a year in Dhaka."

The President of the society, Professor M A Mannan, urged the government to set up a neurosurgical unit in each of the eight Medical Colleges in the country.

Punishment to killers of Galib, Liton demanded

Supporters of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Jahangirnagar University Unit Tuesday brought out a procession on the campus protesting the killings and violence on the Dhaka University campus, reports BSS.

The procession paraded the university campus and held a brief rally. The speakers at the rally blamed the Chhatra League for the killings and patronising violence on the campus. They urged the members of law enforcing agencies to bring the culprits to book. They also urged the students to unite against anarchy and terrorism.

Meanwhile, Prof Md Enamul Haque Khan, President of both the Bangladesh University Teachers Federation (BUTF) and Jahangirnagar University Teachers Association (JUTA) expressed his grief and sorrow over the loss of two valuable lives on the Dhaka University campus. He urged all the political parties to expel armed hoodlums from their parties for restoring peace in the campuses. He also urged the government and law-enforcing agencies to be strict in recovering arms from the campuses and arresting terrorists. Referring to Jahangirnagar University he said, "we are determined to keep peace in our campus by all costs."

Jahangirnagar University Central Students Union (JUCSU) VP Moniruzzaman Monir and QS Rashedul Hassan Masum in a statement condemned the killings and violence on the campus and demanded exemplary punishment of the culprits.

Attendance of students in the residential halls and classes was very thin though the university re-opened after a scheduled closure of Durga Puza.

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