

THE LADY TELLS IT ALL

THIS book is an amazingly candid and intensely personal account of the marital life of Tehmina Durrani and Malek Ghulam Mustafar Khar, both of whom are well known personalities in the Pakistani political scene. The latter's public life is also laid bare as Tehmina Durrani takes us through the intricate schemes masterminded by her husband and his colleagues throughout the 15 years of their life together.

Tehmina Durrani achieved a political status of her own when she campaigned vigorously for the release of her husband who was incarcerated in jail upon his return from exile in London, during Zia-ul-Haque's military regime. M. Ghulam Mustafar Khar, known as the 'Lion of the Punjab' was the province's Governor and Chief Minister as well as the close associate of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Tehmina Durrani was his seventh wife and twenty-two years his junior when they got married. Superficially, readers may view the book as a 'tell it all' vendetta (to expose a public figure) on the part of a wife who has been subjected to intermittent spells of gross physical, mental and emotional abuse over a period of fifteen long years. To crown it all was the utter degradation of seeing a husband carry on an affair with her youngest sister (considered an 'incestuous' relationship in Islam), started when she was barely in her early teens. This eventually proved to be the proverbial straw which broke the camel's back when the relationship was rejuvenated after a long gap, during which her sister had married and become the mother of two kids.

However, on a deeper level, one can view the book as a catharsis of a once passionate

My Feudal Lord: By Tehmina Durrani: 1991. First Published in Pakistan by Tehmina Durrani: 61-C, Gulberg III, Lahore. Printed at Intikhab-i-Jadeed Press, Abbot Road, Lahore.

Review by Nancy Wong

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Portrait of Tehmina Durrani on the back cover of the book.

and loving relationship which careened wildly off the tracks because of the highly unpredictable and brutal behaviour of the protagonist, Mustafar Khar.

Tehmina Durrani had early glimpses of the violent side of her husband when she lived as his second wife in Pakistan — from accounts related to her by his sixth wife. At that time all three (menage a trois) were living under the same roof. Though in the first blush of romance, she tended to dis-

believe the 'tales' of a woman scorned. However, she found herself facing the same brutality when she was hesitant in giving intimate details of her first marriage. She was beaten blue and black, her face was 'contorted', her 'eyes had disappeared deep into huge purple patches' and 'a capillary had burst in her eye'. This kind of savagery persisted throughout their married life. More often than not, it would be followed by contrition and abject grovelling. Hence, the

dark clouds would evaporate and the sun come out — until the next outburst of uncontrollable temper and its inevitable violence.

Tehmina Durrani left her husband three times with the intention of divorcing him, before the fourth and last time when she finally did. The question of all readers' lips must be: How could any woman have endured this physical and mental torture for fifteen years? The answer lies in the subcontinent's (and indeed most parts of Asia) obsession with 'face' — and the feudal system whereby society at large has cast the wife's position as that of a 'loyal serf'. The author came from a family of considerable means and standing in society, which looked on divorce as the ultimate disgrace for a woman and to whom 'appearance' mattered above every other consideration — even though it meant their daughter being battered half to death!

In her inexperience and exuberance of youth, she had fallen victim to the charms of a much practised older Casanova and had divorced her young husband to become Mustafar Khar's seventh wife. This aroused her parents' ire as they considered it a slur on the family honour. Hence Tehmina Durrani was entirely on her own and could expect no support from them when she found herself in the throes of a tormented marriage. In writing this explicitly candid book (which reads in parts like a Gothic novel) the author has courageously torn the veil of societal hypocrisy and revealed the rich, feudal class with all its warts and their vast discrepancies between words and action. She herself had been trapped in this web of lies and



had managed for many years to put on a convincing act for Mustafar Khar's political supporters of a stable marriage. How little did they know of the incessant turbulence behind the calm, respectable facade! Yet, finally, the human spirit could endure no more and no longer — after Mustafar Khar stripped her off everything which mattered in life. Then did Tehmina Durrani chronicle her trials and tribulations of life with a feudal lord?

Besides their personal life the author also writes vividly on Mustafar Khar's multifarious political activities — giving credit to his mass appeal and sharp instincts as well as exposing the many times he turned coat to suit his own ambitions. His political career really took off because of his close association with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at the time when the latter was at the pinnacle of power. However, for various reasons, the two politicians (who were once thick as thieves) fell out and Mustafar Khar first joined the Muslim League and later, the National People's Party.

The most exciting and fulfilling time of their life to-

gether seems to be the period when Mustafar Khar was in jail and Durrani emerged as a political personality in her own right, by first being his conduit to the party workers, the press and outside world; and later growing politically astute and involving herself in championing his release. Tehmina Durrani acknowledges the political tutelage she received from her husband and admits to being intoxicated with the power and lure of politics. This fascination with helping to chart the people's destiny however is given short reign, for as soon as Mustafar Khar is released from jail, she is unceremoniously shunted into the background and all her hard work in fighting for his freedom and keeping his name alive among party workers and the masses, obviously forgotten.

Being married to Mustafar Khar gave Tehmina Durrani access to Pakistan's political scene, one aspect of which was the varied activities of the political exiles and their plans. She writes incisively of the role played by the army in Pakistani politics and her husband's hand in trying to minimize it by joining forces with firstly, Indira Gandhi and after her assassination, Rajiv. The object was to crush and humiliate the army by defeating it in a war. This was allegedly the scenario around 1980 and how the entire plan disintegrated makes fascinating reading.

There was also the movement to dislodge Zia-ul-Haque through agitation as well as the instigation of some young Turks in the army to mount a coup. As we know, these came to naught, but it is interesting to learn why and how the Byzantine labyrinth of Pakistani politics winds its way.

Not only is 'My Feudal Lord' a damning indictment of most aspects of feudalism and its attendant evils of macho supremacy and female subjugation; it is also an enlightening political diary of an 'insider'.

The Interdicted Nazrul

Nishiddha Nazrul O Annyannya Prosanga, a volume of essays on Poet Nazrul Islam, by Titash Chowdhury.

An Appreciation by Khurshedul Islam

LITERARY criticism or for that matter the criticism of any work of art is an act to be performed by one not living in an ivory tower, or from an Olympian height. The critic should invariably have unclouded visions, right perspectives and a most convincing power of thinking. But what is imperative for him is to possess an ingenuity in expatiation, interpretation, analysis and appreciation, and above all to have an ability to reach the closest proximity of the object of criticism and rightly to get into the core of it. As I go through the book 'Ebong Nishiddha Nazrul O Annyannya Prosanga' (and the interdicted Nazrul and other topics), a neat volume of essays by Titash Chowdhury on our national poet Nazrul Islam, the

which were forbidden or proscribed in different countries and in different ages for political or religious reason, or on the ground of obscenity. They include the works of Homer, Confucius, Copernicus, Machiavelli, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Milton, Goethe, Shelley, Keats, Henry Miller, D. H. Lawrence, Boris Pasternak, Solzhenitsin, Pablo Neruda, etc. A few of Nazrul's that received the rulers' seal of prohibition or forfeiture in their fate rank among them to our great glory and to the loving traditions of our struggling mother tongue.

Undoubtedly Titash Chowdhury has brought into intense focus the depth and spirit of the subject-matters, given comprehensive treatment to each of the selected areas of Nazrul's Thoughts and

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above ideas run across my mind. The anthology contains, besides the short ones culled in the appendix, fourteen principle articles. Although expository and analytical by nature, they are tinged with a personal style of creative prose.

The essays cover a variety of themes relating to the life and work of Nazrul Islam. They comprise the poet's early writings, the dedicatory citations by him, his term with the 'Shanibarar Chhiti' — a literary journal, his imprisonment and hunger, non-communalism in him, his meet with Pabindranath, the equity and similarity between him and Madhusudan, the use of traditions by himself and Jasmuddin, he as seen by Pabindranath, the study of science by him, his sojourn at Daulatpur and his becoming an interdicted personage.

Nazrul Islam has gone down into the history of world literature as a rebel poet. In the British dominated India he was censured, outlawed and imprisoned for his incinerating writings in both prose and poetry that aimed at breaking loose the shackles of incarceration in which the colonial rulers had put the people of this sub-continent. Titash Chowdhury has admirably assayed to throw light more on this aspect of Nazrul's identity as a rebel.

While dwelling upon this trait, the writer has alluded to a number of masterpieces

temperament and driven home to his readers both the acres and contours of the chosen grounds. He has provided them too with adequate backgrounding to the items of his discourse and thus has enabled them to gain a domain of truth and understanding about an extraordinary progeny of poetry who kindled the imagination of the downtrodden in our part of the world in this century.

The contents of this book not only provoke thoughts in the readers but also present their author to them as both a critic and cultist of Kazi Nazrul Islam. Titash Chowdhury's experience as a pursuer of Nazrul studies as well as his imaginative insight about literary criticism has found an apt reflection in the volume.

In fine, I should vouchsafe to say that, through this anthology of his essays, Titash Chowdhury has worked as a genuine promoter of Nazrul studies with great human touch and human interest. But the little of the book for the word 'Ebong' in the beginning seems to have betrayed a secret temptation of the author's mind to startle his readers with a stunt.

The tri-colour cover-design by artist Hashem Khan is attractive, and has added value and significance to the publication.



Film Mogul Puts \$ 200m Price on Bond's Head

JAMES BOND, along with the movies based on his extraordinarily long career with the British secret service, is up for sale.

Albert 'Cubby' Broccoli, the 81-year-old film producer who made 007 a household name more than 25 years ago, is selling Danjaq, the Swiss holding company that owns the rights to the Ian Fleming stories. He is putting a price of more than \$200m on 007's head; but some in the film industry doubt if Bond is worth that.

Several British companies are believed to be interested in the sale, which is being handled by Lazard

'Bond movies are the sort that Hollywood studios live for. It has been one of the most successful series in the history of the business and there is no suggestion that the Bond franchise is going to go away.'

Freres, the Wall Street brokers. 'We are getting inquiries from a number of different areas,' said Saul Cooper, Broccoli's spokesman. 'There is quite definitely interest from British companies.'

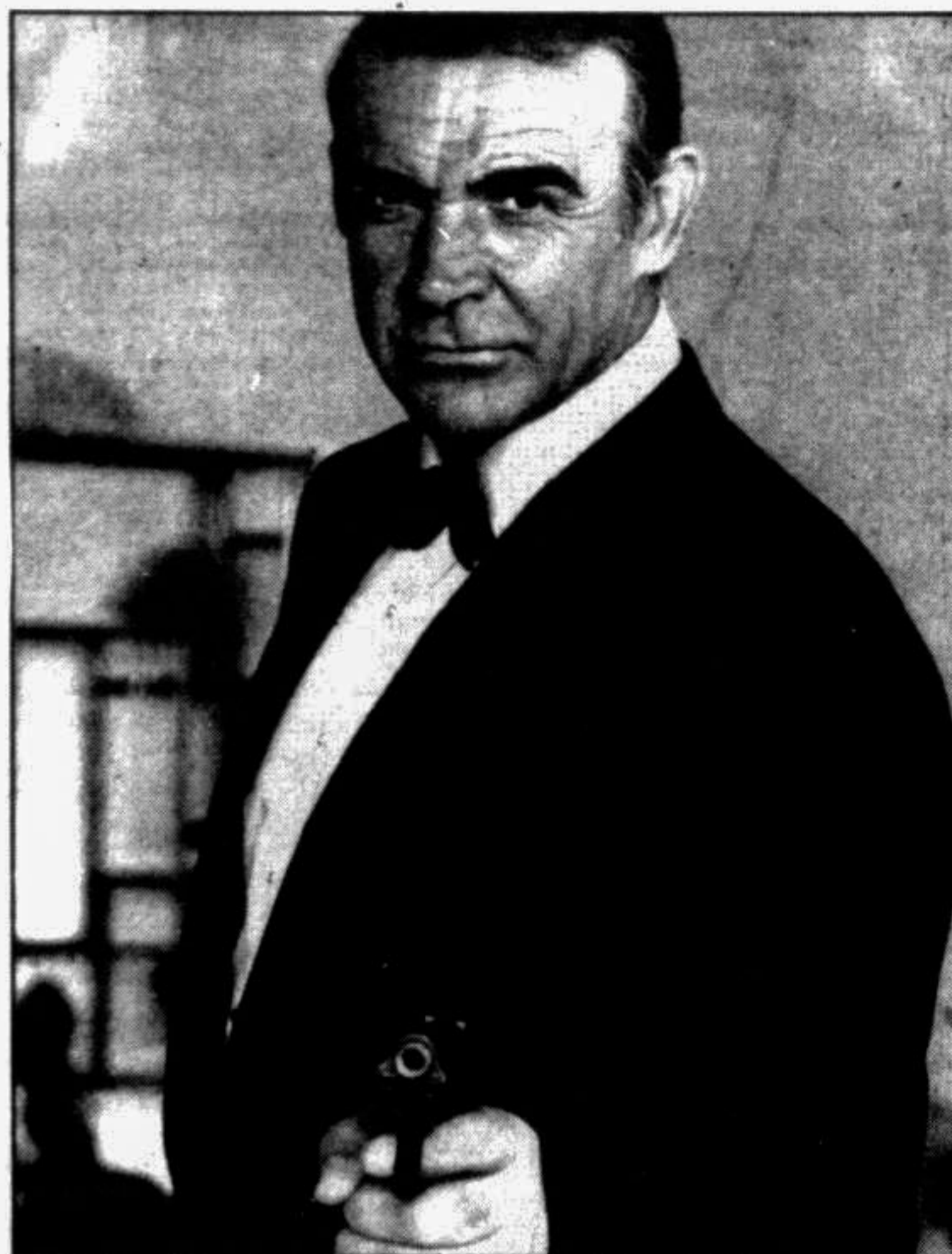
Broccoli, who used to live in Mayfair when the Bond films were made at Pinewood, would welcome a British buyer for Bond. 'A properly placed British buyer would be in the best position to nurture the Bond material,' said Cooper.

On one financial assessment, each of the 16 Bond films is worth about \$10m. But one senior Hollywood executive doubted if the Bond catalogue was worth more than \$60m. The news that Bond is up for sale will start a debate on just how much the debonair British spy really is worth in the blood-and-guts age of Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

'The James Bond films are an annuity for an eternity,' said Alexander Walker, film critic of the Evening Standard and author of a book on the Bond character. It's a very, very good investment.'

financial consultants, said: 'Bond movies are the sort that Hollywood studios live for. It has been one of the most successful series in the history of the business and there is no suggestion that the Bond franchise is going to go away.'

Others, however, think Bond may be past his sell-by date. Jack Mathews, film editor of the Los Angeles Times, said: 'Bond has pe-



Cool Customer: Sean Connery was the first Bond, but character has lost fans to less suave heroes.

tered out, or is petering out. The James Bond crowd is now older and the innuendoes and double entendres which were once the hallmark of the Bond movies are no longer stimulating. Bond isn't naughty any more.'

In an attempt to drag Bond into the 1990s to compete with movies such as Die Hard, Lethal Weapon and this summer's blockbuster, Total Recall, Broccoli has fired John Glen, the director of the last five Bond films, and dismissed Richard Maibaum, a writer who has worked on 13 Bond films.

Bond films are no longer blockbusters in America and the current Bond, Timothy Dalton, who starred in last year's Bond film, Licence To Kill, lacks the American box office appeal of Sean Connery and Roger Moore. Licence To Kill grossed just \$16.6m in America compared with takings of more than \$28m (in 1965 money) for Thunderball, starring Connery almost

25 years ago. Outside the American market, however, Bond films remain big business.

Since the first Bond film, Dr. No, which co-starred Ursula Andress, box office receipts worldwide have totalled \$1.03 billion. But waning American appeal is bound to be reflected in the sale price.

The emergence of video and multi-channel television, however, has made the Bond library a valuable commodity.

ITV recently paid in the region of £5m for British terrestrial television rights to 15 of the 16 Bond films, destined for peak-time Saturday evening viewing this autumn.

Any new Bond films will still have to be made by Eon, the production company Broccoli has handed over to his family.

The new owner must honour an existing deal with the MGM/UA studio, which has the right to distribute the Bond films until the year 2002.

It also has the first option on any forthcoming 077 features.—S.C.

Who's Afraid of the ATP?

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by the ministry of civil aviation due to the eight-month grounding was not all that bad either, because it loses more, at current prices, by flying the damn things anyway.

And now the human factor, which is where we came in. Who is afraid of ATP?

Things are apparently changing here. None of the large number of passengers travelling on Biman's two ATPs has been known to demand a parachute or take out an extra life insurance policy before boarding the plane. Now, that's confidence for you. We are, after all, talking about a plane that's been called every name under the sun, and subjected to enough flak to shoot down the entire Royal Air Force three times over.

But what is it really like flying in an ATP?

Well, it certainly isn't anything like cruising in a Boeing 747 Jumbo jet, which gives the passenger enough leg and elbow room to play golf in; neither does the 300mph ATP make you feel as if you are sitting in a high-luxury movie hall, as the 550mph Jumbo does. But then, one cannot really expect to find the pleasure of driving a Rolls Royce at the price of a Volkswagen Beetle!

The pilots seem happy with the plane. Spending a few minutes on the cockpit of an ATP flying from Dhaka to Cox's Bazaar recently was just as relaxing and enjoyable as anything else. This is important, because if the pilot feels at ease with the machine in his command, then others need not worry. After all, like the captain of an ocean-going ship, the pilot of a plane knows what's best for his crew and passengers. It's not only his authority, it is also his responsibility.

Biman's strong point, in the absence of such international glamour as one associates with Air France, Lufthansa, British Airways or Singapore Airlines, is the human element. It was particularly reassuring to see that the service given by the aircrew and hostesses was at a level one would expect on international routes.

Considering the harassment and trouble a Bangladeshi has to endure when dealing with government departments and agencies, one would have been forgiven for expecting the same from the Biman staff in an internal route.

But not Biman's hostesses. Whatever problems the corporation may have in its ground-station management, those don't exist in the air.

And judging by the ATP's

smooth take-off, landing and flying performance, these two new planes are most unlikely to affect service. Naturally, the smoothness of flights will vary according to pilot skill and weather conditions, but so long as the pilot has confidence in the machine at his disposal, passengers can busy themselves with the scenery below.

Capt. Liaquat, the pilot, who seemed only too pleased to have a passenger join him in the cockpit as the plane cruised at 10,000ft on autopilot, did not try to beat any propaganda drum on behalf of the ATP. He regretted all the bad publicity, because it had given an unjustifiably poor name to what is essentially a good aircraft.

For a passenger, the chance to have a chat with the captain in the cockpit is always a thrill. This is something virtually guaranteed on major airlines flying international routes, as the crew are only too eager to explain to curious passengers how the plane worked and what all the instruments and indicators did.

Most crews are, of course, more fond of children than grown-ups, since they are more inquisitive and more incisive with their questions, and also because explaining

such things to kids carries an educational value. But the Biman flight's captain's readiness to invite a grown-up into the cockpit during such a short flight possibly means this 'service mentality' is well established among Biman crews.

Amid all that, the much-feared noise and vibration factors seemed quite lost. Sitting right next the starboard wing, with the propeller whirring away, one could have expected to faint within minutes. But the noise turned out to be quite bearable. One gets used to it by the time the plane finishes climbing to its cruising height; just as one gets used to the gentler whine of a jet engine.

The seats were narrow, as one would surely expect on a short-haul plane, but the leg room was spacious enough to allow passengers to dump their jumbo-sized hand luggage under their seats and still not feel cramped. Of course, Biman could always reduce the number of seats and make more room. But then, how would the passengers like to pay three times more than the current fare?

And the vibrations? What vibrations? Oh, that vibration! It's there alright, but you really have to look for it.

WRITE TO MITA

Dear Mita,
Your explanation about heat stroke was useful. Where can we get such practical information easily? It is not always convenient to consult a doctor on simple matters. If you started a column just on health problems I think it would be appreciated. What do you say to that?

Shahana, Malibagh, Dhaka.

Dear Shahana,
I am not qualified to start a column on health. The explanation on heat stroke was from the doctor in our team. I agree that it is convenient to get practical advice on simple medical problems without having to go to the doctor. Maybe somebody more qualified, after reading your letter might start a column.

Dear Mita,
Recently my husband got a better job offer in Dhaka and left Chittagong where we had been living for the past 7 years. Since decent, affordable housing in Dhaka is impossible to find my husband thinks I should stay in Chittagong with the children. Tell me is that at all practical? We are having big arguments about this. Do you think he has some other reason to want me to stay here? Please advise, how should I handle this!

Anonymous, Chittagong.

Dear Anonymous,
Please don't allow unnecessary suspicions to enter your head, it is very self destructive. Your husband might have a very valid reason for wanting you to stay in Chittagong. However I agree that it is not the best solution. Decent affordable houses are very difficult to find but the cost of living separately might be much more. Instead of having arguments please try to tackle this problem together. Small arguments and fights often turn into major areas of conflict between couples.

Dear Mita,
Why do teenagers always behave in ways that parents don't

like? They oppose us just for the sake of opposing, as if they have to live up to a certain stereotype. I try very hard to adjust with my teenage son but it seems nothing makes him happy. What do you suggest?

Selina, Maghbazar, Dhaka.

Dear Selina,
This is a tough question and one with which all parents with teenage children have struggled at some point. Generally this kind of behaviour is a phase which passes as they grow older. It is very difficult for parents to understand and at the same time prevent children from acquiring habits that would ultimately harm them in future. Your only guarantee against this is to keep on communicating, be as close as possible and never let them feel that you have given up on them. These years are crucial both in terms of their development and relationship with the family and in no way should be jeopardized.

Dear Mita,
This is an embarrassing problem and I have been very hesitant to write. My friend's husband tries to flirt with me which is creating a lot of problems. My friend has started to misunderstand me and I don't know what to do. In public he makes it look like a joke and in private he makes a nuisance of himself. I have told him that I am not interested but he just won't take a hint. I am divorced and work in a company. What do you advise?

Anonymous, Chittagong.

Dear Anonymous,
The time for giving hints is over. The man must be told bluntly that you are not interested. There are some men who think that a woman is available just because she is divorced. I suggest you take a very tough attitude towards him. Talk and explain the situation to your friend, perhaps she needs help. Ultimately if nothing works then you will have to stay away from them, even at the cost of your friendship.