

Mahmuda Choudury

A Continuous Struggle

Mahmuda Chowdhury, diplomatic corespondent at Dainik Din Kal also covers just about anything from politics, agriculture to cinema and human rights and has been in the profession for over three decades. For her being a journalist is a life-long passion, one that she has had to struggle and fight for. Although from a conservative family, Mahmuda even as a little child was always surrounded by books, journals and newspapers. Her father was a doctor and paternal uncle a political activist who was constantly reading and encouraging his niece to delve into books. But it was also her mother who got her interested in the world of journalism. "My mother used to avidly read the newspaper the first thing in the morning and was always reading whatever journals or magazines she could find," says Mahmuda. Curiosity prompted little Mahmuda to find out what was so interesting in the papers and before she knew it she was hooked. "My father wanted me to be a doctor but I always dreamt of being a journalist."

Her good grades in science encouraged her to study harder but right after her HSC exams she was married off changing the course of her life. Mahmuda desperately wanted to continue studying and got admitted at Dhaka University's Botany department and was in her second year when her first daughter was born. Mahmuda managed to complete her BSC from Jagannath College but it was difficult to continue as her child would often get sick and depressed. She had to give up continuing studying (she got admitted to Dhaka University to study Zoology) as her absence was beginning to have serious psychological effects on her child. But a break in academic study did not stop Mahmuda to read and go on reading, from textbooks she borrowed from her friends, books on political science, sociology, psychology and Bangla literature as well as film magazines and of course newspapers. She even managed to take a journalism and film appreciation course from the Dacca Film Institute affiliated with British Film Institute and run by Alamgir Kabir. Later in the early 80s she took a course in Bangladesh Film Archives and Film Institute.

When Mahmuda and her husband moved to Maghbazar she was approached by a neighbourhood