

Rokeya Sultana at an award giving ceremony with other dignitaries.

volunteered as a nurse tending to the injured freedom fighters and supplying our soldiers with medicines," says Nazneen of her role as a freedom fighter.

Nazneen graduated with a degree in Physics from the University of Dhaka and joined Bangladesh Bank as an assistant computer programmer in 1980. At that time, computer use was still a rarity in the country. Apart from Bangladesh Bank, Adamjee Jute Mills and Atomic Energy Commission were the only other organisations to own computers. Nazneen Sultana, therefore, has another feather in her cap, as she was one of the first computer programmers of the country.

When she expressed her intention to work rather than be a stay-at-home mother, Nazneen received mixed reactions from the people around her. She was advised to join an educational institute as a teacher but very few motivated her to follow her dreams of joining the civil service. Her parents, luckily, were encouraging but she still had to face taunts and jibes from those who doubted her abilities.

"Social expectations from a woman were very different back then as opposed to what you'd see at present. While I was working as a civil servant, most women in my social circle were housewives, focused solely on taking care of their children. And they'd often try to



Milee Biswas attended the Conference of International Association of Women Police in the US as a delegate of the UN Peacekeeping Mission.

make me feel guilty, stating that my children were being deprived of my care and attention because I was a working woman. But I believe that I spent quality time with my kids, and my work never interfered with the upbringing of my children," she says, dismissing claims that a working woman can't be a good mother.

Saida Muna Tasneem, Director General, (United Nations and Human Rights) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, graduated with a degree in