

"REMEMBER, REMEMBER, THE 12TH OF DECEMBER"

KASHFIA RAHMAN

ILLUSTRATION: NASHAD N D

Last year around April, I was going through a whirlwind trip. I wasn't much of a morning person; nevertheless I was forcing myself to get up at the crack of dawn so that I don't end up missing my ride to the next destination. This trip came with an incoming onslaught of some of the worst headaches in a decade. My travel companions were two very senior, workaholics from the management, none of whom understood why I looked drained. We went from one province to another everyday on boats, ferries, planes, bikes you name it.

When I came back home, I just wanted to rest forever. My husband would many a times complain that I would rather sleep than enjoy the weekend. I felt more tired than usual this time around and since I had a hunch, I went and did a test. Early in the morning, the results came; two streaks. Did it again- two streaks. I went and woke my husband up with the good news. He smiled and went back to sleep (best reaction!). He did remember later in the morning, when I was sleeping and gave a proper exuberant exclamation.

To every person we broke the news to, everyone gave the much expected congratulations, many gave free counsel on what's to come and to treasure this moment as much as we can. Then came the dreaded morning pregnancy blues.

No one told me how much I'll cry. Don't get me wrong, I'm a cry baby by nature. My emotions are on my face. But pregnancy made me extra emotional. My sensitive meters were off the charts. Everything made me so sad and no one could.

My pregnancy blues were finally over and I started to enjoy eating and letting go of my weight. I gained, I huffed and puffed and went into my fully round, fat nosed phase of the third trimester. We then got to know that we are expecting a daughter! This was especially emotional for us, since my late father in law always wanted a girl child in the family. This daughter to be, decided to be a kung fu panda and went kicking up a storm around my stomach. Especially, from 12 a.m. onwards she'd play soccer. Days passed and I became too heavy; I just wanted to get it over with already. I mean, I carried a watermelon everywhere.

However, our daughter was already set on the path to stubbornness. I took on traffic, waited for hours to see the most sought after gynecologist at the mere chance of trying a normal delivery. Credit goes to her father for taking on this insanely boring job of waiting with me and giving me company. 4 hours of 'kill time' for a 5 minute consultation would always feel inadequate. Everything went as expected and the doctor asked me to wait for the pain to start normally. By the 40th week, since she refused to budge, I was told that I should consider an induced delivery.

What I wasn't told about being induced was that I'll be locked in an entirely different unit with other howling, very pregnant women crying their life out. I dressed comfortably, took a book to read expecting to distract myself when the pain would start (I mean that's what the baby centre said I should do), a pack of chewing gum, a charger for my phone and of course a lip balm so that my lips won't crack while I screamed. The nurses took everything away and made me dress in hospital robes. I was asked to walk to and fro the asylum like corridor while the chemical would slowly start to induce labour. I carried a saline bag attached

to a mobile stand everywhere and from time to time I would peek through a tiny window towards the waiting area, where my parents would anxiously ask how I'm feeling. I could tell my father who dislikes being in hospital feeling very distraught while my mother stayed strong. I felt a bit bad seeing so many of our family members coming in to check on me while my labour progressed. None of whom were allowed inside the labour unit. Even my 80+ year old aunt came in a wheel chair worrying about me. Our dear daughter is yet to realise the blessing of a family and she had so many people already concerned about her. When the pain truly began, I bled a lot and kept hyper ventilating whilst the nurse suddenly realized that she was asked to reduce the pain a while back. My mother in law who has seen her fair share of deliveries being a doctor herself couldn't take my primal cries. I won't lie; I did have



| MUSINGS |

my allocated share of outbursts along with the other, very angry, pregnant women around me. After 12 hours of atrocious pain, and being 9.5 cm dilated, our daughter still wouldn't come out. She finally came through an emergency c section and I wouldn't call it love at first sight. I would call it, relief with one injection.

On 12th December, at 11.34 p.m. of the year 2015, my life changed in ways that I have never thought of. She came with a bang and I won't have it any other way. I think the miracle of birth is that, after all that horrible experience you're willing to go through it again, once you experience the joy of parenthood. I mean yes I got pooped on, bitten, vomited and there are days I think 'what was I thinking?' but the rush of going home from work, just to see her crawl/pace her way towards me expressing her most genuine, jubilant, heartwarming smile is a feeling indescribable. She is pure joy and I love seeing her grow up into an individualistic, stubborn person with her own persona. She already loves songs, head banging, trying to mimic us talking, refuses to walk when we want her to and would chomp at our fingers and laugh out loud when we say 'Ouch!'

To our daughter, Eshal Khan, Happy Birthday! Last year was brilliant, let's do more of this and when I'll finally make you read this, I want you to throw us (Baba & Mamma) a killer party in the future. I love you.

Mamma

| SPOTLIGHT |

10 STORIES TO LOOK BACK AT

ELITA KARIM



Published on the very first day of 2016 (January 01, 2016), Fayeeka Zabeen Siddiqua (photographer - Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo), wrote about the young Bangladeshi under-14 football team, who had clinched the AFU U-14 Girls' Regional Championship trophy. Beating the host nation Nepal (1-nil), this win was the very first international win for women's football in Bangladesh. Indeed, the year at the Star Weekend did start off at a positive note and everyone around celebrated with the young footballers. However, as weeks and months flew by, our stories began to reflect yet another aspect of society.

Visit: <http://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/spotlight/she-aims-shoots-scores-194959>

SHE AIMZ SHOOTS SCORES!



A FIGHT FOR LAND AND LIVELIHOOD

Published in January 22, 2016, Ahmad Ibrahim along with photographer Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo, took a bus to Chandpur Tea Estate in Habiganj and spent a few days with the tea workers. What they experienced was beyond imagination – so much more intense and complicated than what was being written about them on online forums and social media. Living on the land for more than a century, the tea workers were suddenly made foreign to their own homes. The lands were being occupied using force and violence, to which the workers were also responding with courage.

Visit: <http://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/spotlight/fight-land-and-livelihood-205144>



A REVOLUTION HUNDRED YEARS IN THE MAKING

