

UNSUNG WOMEN NATION BUILDERS 2017



Bhaga Rani Banik,
Woman of green

When she became the director general of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) in June 2016, Bhaga Rani Banik was the first woman to hold that post.

She graduated from Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University and joined Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) in 1983. Ms Banik earned her PhD from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agriculture University in 2003. She has significant contribution in food sufficiency and climate change research.

Under her leadership BRRI has achieved international success. She has contributed in developing better breed of corn. She has 37 research articles published in national and international scientific journals.



Irani Baroi, An indomitable soul on a mission to help the sick

Even though her legs became paralysed, Irani Baroi did not give up her mission of helping the sick. Irani is a senior nurse today at the 100-bed general hospital in Madaripur.

She earned her diploma in Nursing from Dhaka Medical College and Hospital in 1986 and started her career in Madaripur General Hospital. She came down with fever in 1996 and her hands and legs became paralysed. Therapy brought back the use of her hands but her legs did not improve.

Despite being paralysed, she is by no means inferior to any other nurse in her hospital, her patients, superiors, and co-workers testify to that. She believes as long as she can use her hands, she can continue to help her patients in every way possible.



Fatema Begum, The first female police officer

First woman police officer and additional inspector general of police, Fatema Begum is one of the first two women who chose to join the police service after their Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exam in 1984.

The other quit soon after, but she continues to serve in the police and became the first woman to become an additional inspector general of police.

"Firm in their belief that the police force was no place for women, they tried to make us leave from the very first day – beginning with barring our entry at the orientation for new officers," says Fatema. She was forced by her bosses to write to the home ministry asking it to give her a posting in some other cadre service.

After the training was over, the male officers were ordered to pack and go to the Police Academy. But there was no instruction for Fatema. She waited and waited, but no orders came. A couple of days later, she wrote to the Police Headquarters saying she would not give up her job and that she would rather wait further. She was allowed to go to the academy after she persisted.



Rokeya Begum, Blindness no bar to teaching

Rokeya Begum, who became blind at the age of 3, is an assistant teacher of Tambulkhana govt primary school. Her indomitable spirit has brought her to this position. She teaches like any regular teacher. Moreover, she is a popular teacher.

She had to struggle to be here today. Her father Sheikh Mujibor Rahaman died leaving five daughters and one son. Three of the sisters are also blind. When her mother also died after a few years, their elder sister Sahanaj Begum took them in.

Now Rokeya's two blind sisters are in university. Shekha Begum is a student of MA in the Department of Social Science at Eden Mohila College Dhaka. Ashia Akter is a student of BA in the Department of History at Dhaka University.

"She is a really good teacher and also a good person," said Kakoli Saha headmaster of Tambulkhana Government Primary School. "She is meritorious and she has an indomitable spirit."



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