

The life and times of Begum Hamidullah

She is also credited among the pioneers of Pakistani literature in English....

TRIBUTE

As our cars hurtle down Saddar's congested Zai-bunnisa Street, we seldom wonder how Karachi's central thoroughfare got its name. Previously known as Elphinstone Street, this now-bustling boulevard is named after journalist, poet and short story writer Zaib-un-Nissa Hamidullah. Begum Hamidullah is billed as Pakistan's first women editor and publisher, and then first female English columnist. She is also credited among the pioneers of Pakistani literature in English.

Born in Calcutta in December 1918, Begum Hamidullah was the daughter of Cambridge-educated writer and lawyer Syed Wajid Ali, who translated Rabindranath Tagore into English and rendered Allama Iqbal's Urdu verse into Bengali. She married Khalifa Muhammad Hamidullah, a student in Calcutta who originally hailed from Punjab. Her husband's job in Bata plucked her out of her childhood idyll in Calcutta and immersed her in the unfamiliar terrain of rural Punjab.

Before Independence, she cultivated a reputation as a poet. Her first poem was published in 1936 in the Bombay-based The Illustrated Weekly of India. She later penned a collection of poems titled The Indian Bouquet (1943), which garnered commercial success and inspired her to write a second book of verse, Lotus Leaves (1946).

Begum Hamidullah also wrote copious articles and stories for newspapers in pre-Partition India. In 1945, she was in Simla at the time when political leaders had gathered in the town for the Simla Confer-



ence. During this period, she befriended Fatima Jinnah and gained the golden opportunity to interview her brother Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Begum Hamidullah moved to Karachi with her husband in 1947 and began writing a weekly column for Dawn called 'Between Ourselves'. This wasn't an easy accomplishment for the young writer as patriarchal values often kept women on the fringes of professional life.

Her editor had begrudgingly agreed to let her write the column on the condition that she would focus on

'feminine matters'. Begum Hamidullah fearlessly deviated from the parameters defined by her editor and wrote about fairly political concerns. Her editor wasn't pleased by her unwillingness to toe the line. To escape the excessive curbs on her journalistic voice, she decided to set up The Mirror, a glossy magazine that provided a useful platform for many women journalists.

Owing to her esteemed status as Pakistan's first female editor, Begum Hamidullah became the first woman to be included in a press del-

egation that was sent to Cairo. As a result, she became the first woman to speak at the prestigious Al-Azhar University. She also represented at an UN-funded seminar that sought to enhance the participation of women in Pakistan's public sphere.

In 1956, she published a travelogue of her trip to America as part of a foreign leadership exchange programme funded by the US government. The book, titled Sixty Days in America (1956), comprises columns that she wrote for The Times of Karachi and offers refreshing insights into the West at a time when the Cold War was at its peak. In Hybrid Tapestries: The Development of Pakistani Literature in English, writer and literary critic Muneeza Shamsie states that Begum Hamidullah's "exuberant, and sometimes naive, account is a reminder of how much today's Pakistanis take for granted about America".

In 1957, Begum Hamidullah's fiercely honest editorial comment for The Mirror became the site for considerable controversy. The problem stemmed from her vociferous critique of Major-General Iskander Mirza's decision to do away with the government of premier Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy. As a punitive measure, the government banned The Mirror for six months. Begum Hamidullah was advised to issue a public apology and lay the matter to rest. Instead, she opted for the legal route on the advice of renowned lawyer A K Brohi and appealed to the Supreme Court. The ban on The Mirror was declared unconstitutional and Begum Hamidullah earned the rare distinction of being the first woman journalist in Pak-



istan to defy the ruinous effects of press censorship.

In 1958, Begum Hamidullah published The Young Wife and Other Stories – a slim volume of short stories that deals with subjects that are radically different from those that dominate her journalistic endeavours. In A History of Pakistani Literature in English 1947-1998, scholar Tariq Rahman refers to the book as a collection that "deserves to be treated as serious literature". He declares Begum Hamidullah to be "the best writer of the fifties".

In the preface to the book, Begum Hamidullah reveals that her father often voiced his concerns that her journalistic pursuits couldn't act as a substitute for literature. Through this collection, she channels his concerns and skilfully subverts them by emerging as a writer of stories.

The fifteen stories in The Young Wife deal with a diverse menu of themes. 'Fame' is an absurdist nar-

rative while 'Motia Flowers' and 'Wonder Bloom' are seeded with supernatural elements and heavily influenced by the Gothic tradition. Other stories draw heavily on the cruelties and complexities of old age and evoke the country's rural setting.

The titular story, The Young Wife, depicts a woman's decision to defy conservative values and the vagaries of an arranged marriage. Her quest for independence is set against the backdrop of the Pakistan Movement, which triggered a fresh wave of confidence in the Subcontinent. 'The Bull and the She-Devil' is a tale of love that exposes the troubling extent of gender confrontations in Pakistan. 'No Music before the Mosque', another poignant story in the collection, explores the long-standing debate on the permissibility of music in an inherently orthodox society.

In addition to her journalistic and literary pursuits, Begum Hamidullah ran a publishing company called Mirror Publications between 1966 and 1971. She decided to close down The Mirror after her husband was transferred to Ireland. In 1971, East Pakistan broke away and became a new country. When Begum Hamidullah returned to Pakistan a decade later, she discovered that the country no longer subsumed her identity as a Bengali. After her husband's demise, Begum Hamidullah extricated herself from public life. She wrote on a freelance basis and participated in welfare activities. Begum Hamidullah passed away in September 2000 at the age of 78. She is often remembered as a symbol of feminism and a bastion of press freedom.

Psychologist confirms Amber Heard suffers from twin personality disorders

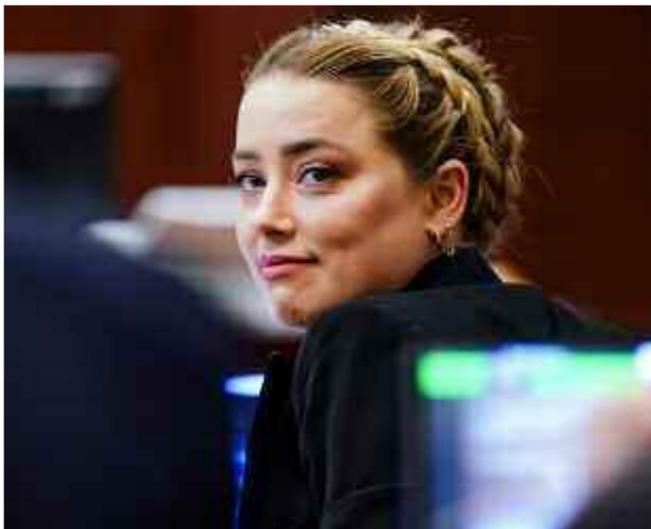
Shannon Curry examined Heard's mental health records, personally evaluated her for 12 hours over two days in Dec 2021

LOS ANGELES: A psychologist hired by lawyers for Pirates of the Caribbean star Johnny Depp testified on Tuesday at his defamation case against his former wife Amber Heard that she suffers from twin personality disorders. Shannon Curry, a clinical and forensic psychologist, said she had examined Heard's mental health records and personally evaluated her for 12 hours over two days in December 2021.

Curry said it was her opinion that the 36-year-old actor, who had a starring role in the movie Aquaman, has borderline personality disorder and

The 58-year-old Depp has denied ever being physically abusive towards Heard and has claimed repeatedly at the trial that she was the one who was frequently violent. 'Washed-up actor' Depp filed a defamation suit against Heard over a column she wrote for The Washington Post in December 2018 in which she described herself as a "public figure representing domestic abuse."

Heard never named Depp but he sued her for implying he was a domestic abuser and is seeking \$50 million in damages. The Texas-born Heard countersued, asking for \$100



histrionic personality disorder. "She obtained scores that were consistent with those diagnoses," Curry said.

Lawyers for Heard sought to discredit Curry's testimony during cross-examination, noting she had been hired by Depp's attorneys to testify on his behalf. "If you did not find something that would be in favor of Mr Depp and negative to Miss Heard then you wouldn't be an expert in this case?" Elaine Bredehoft, an attorney for Heard, asked Curry. "I present science regardless of what that science may be," Curry responded.

Curry said some of the primary characteristics of borderline personality disorder include a "lot of inner anger and hostility," a tendency to be "self-righteous" and "fluctuating moods." "They can react violently, they can react physically," she said. "Oftentimes they will be abusive to their partners. It's almost play-acting," she said. Curry, who has experience with US combat veterans, said it was her opinion that Heard did not suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as the result of alleged domestic abuse. Heard had "grossly exaggerated" her symptoms of PTSD in a test she was given, she said.

million and claiming she suffered "rampant physical violence and abuse" at his hands.

Depp, a three-time Oscar nominee, and Heard met in 2009 on the set of the film The Rum Diary and were married in February 2015. Their divorce was finalised two years later. Heard's attorneys have alleged that Depp would become a physically and sexually abusive "monster" when he was drunk or on drugs, and pressed him extensively about his drug and alcohol use during his three days of cross-examination on the witness stand. Also testifying Tuesday was Tara Roberts, who for the past 15 years has managed a private island in the Bahamas owned by Depp. Roberts was asked by Depp's lawyers to recount details of an argument the couple had on the island one evening. "Amber was telling him that he was a washed-up actor," Roberts said. "He was going to die a lonely old man." She said Heard was yelling at Depp, grabbing at him and trying to pull him back into their house. Roberts said she was "worried" about what might happen and took Depp to a cafe on the island and applied ice to an injury he had received to the bridge of his nose. —Agencies

Lifestyle changes for good health

Here are a few healthy lifestyle changes that could have the most significant impact on your health...



HEALTH

Good health is incredibly complex, and there are lots of tiny tweaks you can make to your daily habits in order to help you live longer, and with more energy. When it comes to your health, your lifestyle choices play an important role. Lifestyle changes are behaviour modifications or habit changes that encourage positive changes in your life.

It's never too late to start integrating healthier habits into your daily routine. Experience a fresh start by taking control of how you feel today and committing to small improvements. These are the building blocks that put you on track to feel stronger, prevent illness, and improve your quality of life for years to come. Here are a few healthy lifestyle changes that could have the most significant impact on your health...

Make sleep a priority: A good night of sleep can improve productivity, boost your mood, and stabilize your blood sugar to control hunger and cravings. You need seven to nine hours every night. The drawbacks to skipping on sleep are no joke. Consider this: if you're skipping just an hour and getting six each night, your risk of obesity goes up 23 per cent. If you have trouble sleeping, use calming essential oils, eat sleep-promoting foods or making an effort to avoid screen time an hour before bed. Instead, unwind before bedtime with a bath or some light reading.

Your body's circadian rhythm functions best when you make a habit of sleeping and waking at consistent times, which eventually stabilises energy and mood. Give up sedentary lifestyle: Sitting in a chair for too long can be the source of many illnesses. Simply standing up for a few minutes can reduce the risks. Adding simple stretching while you stand up can further improve blood circulation and metabolism. Add more movement into your life by breaking-up sedentary activities with physical activity. For instance take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator; swap-up your coffee break for a power walk; after all, walking is the best exercise.

Switch to healthy food: By ditching the processed convenience foods and nourishing yourself with a balanced diet of fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables, whole grains, plant-based proteins, and healthy



polyunsaturated fats, you can improve your health and overall quality of life. Choose healthier fats: Not all fats are created equal. You should avoid 'unhealthy' fats and choose 'healthy' fats. Healthy fats can help lower bad cholesterol and help lose excessive weight. You can find the healthy fats in avocados, coconut oil, butter, extra virgin oil, and omega-3s. Extract sugar from your life: Sugar is bad for your health. Processed sugar can lead to weight gain, which could be the source of certain illness. Sugar has no essential nutrients and is bad for your teeth. Fructose in sugar can lead to liver damage and can cause insulin resistance, which can cause type-2 diabetes. So really take a close look at your diet and consider the amount of sugar you consume on a daily and/or weekly basis.

Increase your water intake: Hydrating yourself is important to many physical and biological activities and benefits. Some benefits of staying hydrated include weight loss, skin elasticity, mood balance, temperature control, and much more! Get more sunlight: Your body craves fresh air and sunlight, not just as a break from being inside but also for the production of vitamin D, an essential nutrient that supports bone health, blood cell production, and a healthy immune system. A day spent enjoying the sunlight can also boost your mood!

Quit Smoking: If you are committed towards a healthier lifestyle



then quitting smoking is mandatory. Smoking is a habit that causes many fatal diseases. Damages include respiratory disease, lung cancer; reduce blood flows, and much more. Avoiding or not starting to smoke in the beginning can help prevent unwanted outcomes. So no more excuses, it's time to quit! Get regular health checkups: You should always be aware of the conditions of your body so that you can increase the chance of preventing illness. Regular annual checkups can help this. You can do regular health checks and add other tests - depending on your health conditions. Stay away from your phone: Too much time on the phone can reduce your vision, leading to bad posture and can limit your social activities outside of the phone. People call reducing spending time on the phone a 'phone diet', which recommends staying away as much as possible because it allows many benefits to come into your life. Limit social media time: How many times a week do you find yourself glued to social media? If this struggle sounds familiar, it may be time to try a social media detox. A detox can break the habit of checking your Facebook or Instagram during downtime, creating space in your day to stay productive and prevent procrastination. It can also reduce headaches and eye and neck tension that often come from staring at a screen too long.

Be socially active: Healthy relationships are what we call 'primary food', the things that nourish and satisfy you off your plate. Think about the people in your life, and commit to spending more time cultivating relationships that make you feel good, uplifted, and inspired. Catch up with a friend over the phone or plan a weekend hiking with family or friends. By nourishing your support system, you'll create a lasting impact on your health, as you'll have someone to turn to during all phases of life, good or bad. Socialising and meeting new people can increase your daily expectation and give you the chance to meet those who will connect with you, ultimately leading to life-satisfaction. Increased life satisfaction can help you have a healthier life. Do what you enjoy: Activities you enjoy would make your every day enjoyable, will help you commit more to the activity, and you will feel more confident. You can try out running, drawing, yoga, biking, hiking, playing an instrument, listening to music, reading a book, or anything else you enjoy!