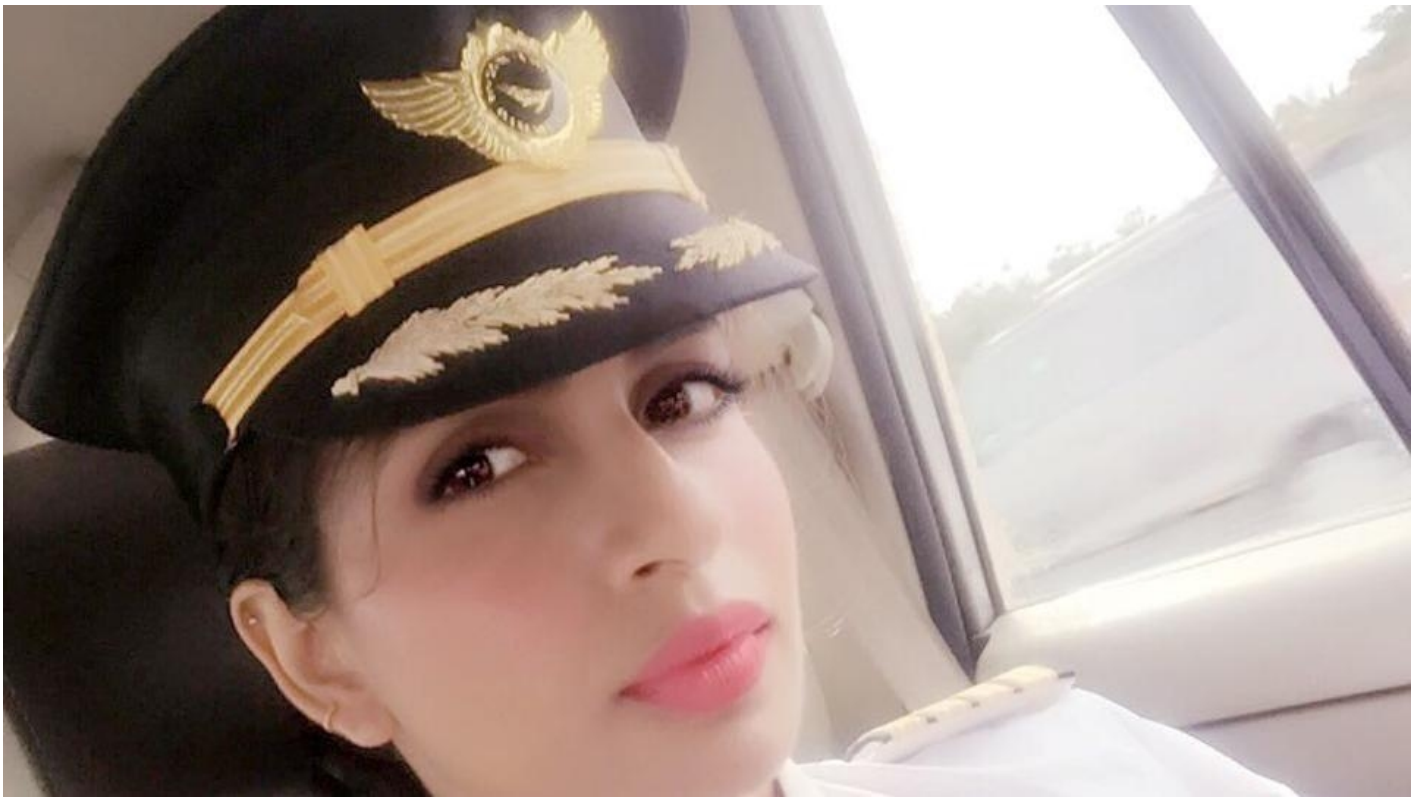
# MEET ANNY DIVYA, WORLD'S YOUNGEST WOMAN COMMANDER TO FLY BOEING 777

**News / Airlines, Personalities**



**There are stories that remind us that we should never give up on our dreams. There are stories that prove that if our willpower is strong, then no matter how bumpy the road is, the heart can always achieve what it desires. One such encouraging story is of Anny Divya, world's youngest woman commander to fly Boeing 777. Born in Pathankot, Anny wanted to become a pilot ever since she was a child. However, her journey towards attaining that goal wasn't easy. In a conversation with HT, Captain Anny Divya, who is currently based in Mumbai, reveals how she battled her way to achieve success.**

**The beginning**

I was born in Pathankot. My father, who was in the army, was posted there. Later, he took voluntary retirement and settled in Vijaywada. I did my schooling in Vijaywada. Since my childhood, I wanted to be a pilot. Other children used to make fun of me for this. Kids, at that time, were pushed to pursue engineering or become a doctor but not a pilot. But luckily, my parents never forced their choice on me. They were supportive and progressive in their thinking. My mother always used to encourage me . However, my relatives and my family friends were against my decision to become a pilot. Also, at that time, being a pilot was not considered as a profession for woman.

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## The initial struggle

I come from a modest background. My family faced financial issues. Since I grew up in Vijaywada, I could write and read English but speaking English was a major challenge that I had to overcome. Right after 12th, when I was 17 years old, I got through Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA), the flying school in Uttar Pradesh. We took a loan for my education. The cultural change from a small town to a big city was overwhelming for me. I had difficulty adjusting and speaking English. People used to mock me for my poor English and that hurt me a lot. At times, I thought of going back. However, I didn't. With my parents' support, I worked hard enought to win a scholarship.

## The flight to victory

I had completed my training when I was 19 years old. As soon as I finished my training, I got a job with Air India. During that period, for the first time, I went abroad. I was sent to Spain for training. When I came back, I got the opportunity to fly Boeing 737. Ever since then, there has been no looking back. When I turned 21, I was sent to London for further training. It was then when I started to fly Boeing 777. Since then, my life has changed. It's been a great experience so far. I've got the opportunity to travel to various countries. My journey so far has taught me a lot.

## An agent of change

Although this profession is still male dominated, the perception that this profession is not for women has already changed to a large extent. I am proud to say that India has taken lead over rest of the world including developed countries, when it comes to number of female pilots. In India, 15% woman fly as airline pilots, while globally, it is an average of approximately 5%.

## Advice for upcoming woman pilots

Your parents are your biggest support , so trust them to keep you grounded. And last but not the least –there's no substitute for hard work.

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