

## Samaira takes the skies at just 18

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Dhaka : Samaira Hullur, once an ordinary schoolgirl from a small town in Karnataka, found her life forever changed after a thrilling helicopter ride.

What started as a childhood adventure soon evolved into a remarkable dream. At just 18 years old, Samaira made history by becoming India's youngest commercial pilot, achieving a significant milestone in the country's aviation industry.

Her journey began in Grade 5, during a helicopter ride organised as part of an event in her hometown of Bijapur. "My mother sat in the cockpit during the ride, and I remember how fascinated she was—especially by the pilot's uniform," Samaira told Better India. That fascination helped her dream of flying high in the skies.

With unwavering support from her mother, Nazeeya Hullur, Samaira

chose an unconventional path. “By Class 9, I was sure I didn’t want a desk job or a career involving a lot of studying. That’s when my mother suggested aviation,” she says.

Taking the suggestion to heart, she attended an orientation session in Class 10 with Captain Thapesh Kumar, which gave her clarity on the path ahead.

From a young age, Samaira was inclined toward adventure sports—horse riding, rock climbing, swimming—but flying became her true passion. “A friend once told me, ‘How many parents encourage their kids to become pilots? You’re lucky. Give it your all.’ That changed everything for me.”

After completing her Class 12 exams, Samaira shifted to Delhi and joined Vinod Yadav Aviation Academy to begin her ground training. These exams were no easy task, but Samaira did exceptionally well and she had to wait for one exam to write for her to turn 18.

When she finally received her CPL, it was an emotional moment. “We have a ceremony where three stripes are added to your shoulders. My grandmother and mother were in tears—they were proud of me,” she said.

Returning to her school as a chief guest after her success was another proud moment. “Our principal used to say we should aim to return as achievers. When I did, I felt I’d truly made it,” she said.

Now 19, Samaira is awaiting responses from airlines and is prepared to begin type rating training if needed. “I’m ready for whatever comes next. If you're really passionate about becoming a pilot, give it your all. It will pay off,” she concludes.

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