

ODYSSEY AI - 40
with Shariar Karim's
“MILESTONES AND MEMORIES”

LAST FLIGHT : AI -39 on 30th November 2020 “ AmCHI New Destination ”
THIS FLIGHT : AI -40 on 3rd December 2020 “ FLIGHT TO ETERNITY ”
NEXT FLIGHT: AI - 41 on 5th December 2020 “ My 700th Flight as an I.F.S ”



NAMASKAAR, WELCOME ABOARD FLIGHT AI-40,
ON MONDAY THE 3RD OF DECEMBER, 2020
Turning back the pages of history,
Today we have reached the 3RD of December 1993.
THIS DAY, THAT YEAR
We bid farewell to the -
“FLIGHT TO ETERNITY”

This is one of the most poignant tributes I have composed about one the most admirable personalities I have met in my life – the father of Civil Aviation in India, Bharat Ratna Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoi Tata. I was privileged to have met him on several occasions and treasure a handwritten note he had once written for me on 3rd May 1978. Will be pleased to share it with you on 3rd May, 2021. He has been a mentor, model and motivator for many of us die hard Air-Indians. I looked up to him with awe and reverence and maybe it was poetic justice that I was in Paris on a layover on the day of his funeral. We were privileged to pay our last respects to him at Pere la Chaise Cemetery where he was laid to rest. My poem was presented to Mr. Ratan Tata at the Funeral along with a floral wreath from all the Crew of Air-India. Thus ended a glorious chapter in the aviation history of India. I am pleased to share with you today, a Tribute from the Magic Carpet along with a few photographs I've compiled from the life of Mr. J.R.D.Tata. He will live on in the hearts of many Indians and all **AIR-INDIAN**s. Bon Voyage Mr. J R D Tata on your **“FLIGHT TO ETERNITY... ”**

*MILESTONES
&
MEMORIES*

SHARIAR KARIM



FLIGHT TO ETERNITY

A pall of gloom, has descended on us,
As we are plunged, in darkness,
As the Doyen of our Airline, you have left us forever,
And we are deep, in sadness,
The legacy you leave, behind for us,
Is something, we will always cherish,
Your '*guiding principles*' will inspire us,
To do, as you would wish.
With '*deep thought*' and '*hard work*',
You always strove, for '*excellence*',
Serving '*the needs, of the country and people*',
You have earned, a rare eminence.
For all your, '*fair and honest means*',
We, you admire and endear,
For you have really, proven to be ,
A precious, '*Jewel of India*'.
You've won a place, in all our hearts,
And attained, immortality,
May God Bless you, Mr. J.R.D,
On your '**Flight to Eternity**'

- *Shariar Karim*

(Please Note - The words in '*Italics*' are from the quotes of Mr. J.R.D.Tata)



Rest In Eternal Peace
JEHANGIR RATANJI DADABHOY TATA

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Two More Boeing 747-400s Join A-I Fleet

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Four New Destinations on A-I Network

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PAGE 9
Foundation Stone for New Housing Complex Laid

MAGIC CARPET

VOL.37 NO. 6

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1993

J.R.D. Dies in Geneva Air-Indians Pay Tribute to Founding Father

With the death of Mr Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhai Tata in his sleep in Geneva on November 29, 1993, Air-India and the nation have lost not only a doyen of Indian Civil Aviation, but the most towering personality of Indian industry.

Although he is no longer in our midst today, Mr. Tata's contribution to Air-India will always be recalled with pride. It was his pioneering effort that gave birth to the Aviation Department of Tata Sons, later to be called Air-India.

The organisation which started mainly as a single man's enterprise way back in 1932 has today grown into a reputed international undertaking with its vast network all over the world.

The traditions of this enterprise of which we are all proud today were founded by the example set by Mr. Tata, one of India's greatest sons who was our Chairman until he relinquished charge in February 1978, and the few people who helped him build this airline in the early days.

Without Mr Tata's dynamic leadership, astounding interest and boundless energy, his unflinching judgement on vital issues and one-track minded guidance, we would never have achieved what we have so far been able to achieve. We owe him - and the small band of dedicated and loyal old timers who worked under his leadership in the early years of the airline - a deep debt of gratitude.

Air-India was then a very small airline. It had two planes, very little money and very little support from the Government. Had it not been for their sweat, their labour of love and devotion, and their sacrifices, this airline we serve today could not possibly have survived.

Is that spirit still with us or is it gradually fading out as we are growing bigger and bigger? Mr. Tata had posed this question in his

address when the first set of Long Service Memorials was presented to the employees on August 1, 1969.

Personal interest, personal prestige seems to be more important to some people than the prestige and interest of this airline, and in fact the prestige and interest of the country as a whole, he had lamented.

"It may be that it is inevitable in this industrialised and materialistic society of today," he had said at the time. "But I for one greatly disapprove of it and it saddens me, because we have done well and I think we could do even better. Great achievements can be possible only with a single-minded devotion to a cause, loyalty and hard work."

All great men, he said, leave behind them footprints on the sands of Time. As Mr. Y. C. Deveshwar, Chairman and Managing Director, Air-India, wrote in his letter to all Air-Indians soon after hearing of Mr. Tata's demise, let us ponder a while on what the founding Father of Civil Aviation in India had to say.



It seems only yesterday that Mr J.R.D. Tata was in our midst at Air-India's Diamond Jubilee celebrations - where his humility, candour and irrepressible delight at being feted won the hearts of everyone present.

who have passed on in building up this airline."

While speaking at Air-India's Diamond Jubilee function held at the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay on October 15, 1992, Mr. Tata had exhorted: "If there is in our minds a total dedication that we are the airline of India, Air-India would be the finest airline in the world. It had been earlier, and there is no reason why it cannot be so now."

Let us, together, pledge our commitment to the traditions, values and standards set by this Legend so that our future can be made brighter and we can bequeath

"I beseech you," he had stated, "that when I am no more, and those of you who will still be there, always remember this, the airline must never, never be allowed to be anything but the best. In doing so, we will not only ensure our own development, growth and progress, but prosperity of our own-people. In addition to serving our own country, we shall be true to the memory of those

a stronger Air-India for the people of tomorrow.

Employees Mourn Death

The news of Mr Tata's death was received with shock at Air-India offices worldwide. Condolence meetings were held in all departments at Bombay and at all stations on Air-India's network to pay homage to him. Two minutes silence was observed to mourn his death. Glowing tributes were paid to him for his contribution to Indian Civil Aviation in general and to Air-India in particular.

A portrait of Mr Tata with a sandalwood garland, and a small 'dya' and flowers in front of it, was placed at the entrance of the Air-India Building at Nariman Point, Bombay, to enable employees pay their respects to Mr. Tata.

In 1958, when Mr. Tata, the architect of Air-India and one of the titans of modern India, took over as President of the International Air Transport Association, Sir William P. Hildred, then Director General of IATA, had introduced him at the world assembly of airline leaders as "a truly distinguished citizen of the world." His first name, Jehangir, meant 'world conqueror' and there could be no man more universal than Mr. J.R.D. Tata, he stated.

A hoarding bearing this great pioneer was hastily prepared and displayed outside the Headquarters Building and at vantage hoarding sites all over the country. It read: "He touched the sky and it smiled. He stretched out his arms and they encircled the globe."

The members of the Air-India Board, in a meeting held on December 18, 1993, also recorded the death of Mr. Tata, and placed on record the yeoman services rendered by him.

Mr. Tata was born in Paris on July 29, 1904 and was 89 at the time of his death. He is survived by his wife Thelma.



Mr Tata: The Epitome of Humility

Although a scion of one of the wealthiest families in the world, Mr. Tata was always a picture of modesty. The hospital room where he breathed his last was as ordinary as any hospital room can be and, because he made no fuss, few knew what a great man he was. During his numerous travels, Mr. Tata would never allow anybody to carry his bag. In fact he carried it himself even when he had reached an advanced age.

Mr. Tata, whose hearty support supported a number of good causes. In recognition of his outstanding work in diverse fields, including industrial development, technological and scientific, educational and research and aviation, he received numerous national and international honours, notably the Bharat Ratna, the Award of International Management Man, National Association of Foremen, Miscellaneous, Tony Jannus Award, Gold Air Medal of the Federation of International Civil Aviation Organisation, and the Daniel Guggenheim Medal Awards.

If there was anyone who richly deserved the Bharat Ratna, the nation's highest civilian award, it was Mr. Tata.

MAGIC CARPET

Vignettes from the Life of Mr J.R.D. Tata

On his Passion for Flying

The aeroplane and flying were to Mr. Tata a dream in which somehow he had to play a part. He has happened to be in his youth a friend of the Bleriot family and of the son of Louis Bleriot, the first man to fly across the English Channel.

Mr. Tata saw his first plane when he was only eight or nine, and at 14 he made his first flight 'in a beach balsa-boat'. Ever since then flying and aviation became a sort of obsession with him. The first thing he had to do was to learn to fly, which he did, and then to get an aeroplane, a small one, with which he did as much flying as possible.

Mr. Tata was the first to get his pilot's licence in the country, and in the shortest number of hours. He made a solo flight from India to Britain in 1930 and the rest is history. His recollection:

"I have not done anything worthy for the country that I should deserve the highest award but as it is the decision of the Government, I cannot oppose or refuse it."

When Mr. Tata was awarded the Tony Jannus Award for 1979 by the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, Florida, in recognition of outstanding contribution to the scheduled airline industry, the founder of Air-India said he didn't know why he had been included in the prestigious group. He then went on to add: "I accept this exaggerated recognition that is given to me in the form of this award which admits me as a member of a prestigious group of men who are in fact the airline greats in aviation of the last 50 years. Even if I had not been a member of this group, merely to know them and meet them as I am doing tonight would have been a great honour. I am indeed grateful."

Dr. R. Venkataraman, the then President of India, conferring the Bharat Ratna upon Mr. J.R.D. Tata in January 1992.



Mr J.R.D. Tata when he was a little boy.

less entrepreneurial spirit led him to build Air-India into one of the world's great airlines and though he presided over a vast industrial empire, with interests ranging from heavy steel industry to soap, aviation and the airline he founded remained his first love. He nurtured and cherished the national carrier over his years. Because he was, to quote his own words, the son of the mother of Air-India, he felt like a mother who can't realise her baby has grown up.

When asked whether he would, if he had the chance, go through it all over again, Mr. Tata had replied: "Yes, I would, in spite of all the headaches, the sorrows and the frustrations it has caused me... the joys and the excitement of adventure and achievement. Even though commercial aviation has now become pretty much of a routine industry like any other, from which most of the individual enterprise and leadership and the sense of adventure has disappeared, there is still something about aviation which one finds in no other activity I know of today."

Air-India was represented at the funeral at Pere Lachaise, Paris, on December 3, 1993 by Mr H.S. Uberoi, Regional Director UK & Europe, and Mr C. R. Basak, Manager France. The following poem penned by Mr Sharat Kumar, an Inflight Supervisor, on behalf of the Air-India Crew who attended the funeral while on a layover, was handed over by Capt. P. S. Maheshwari to Mr Ratan Tata.

Flight to Eternity

A pall of gloom has descended on us,
As we are plunged in darkness for ever,
As the doyen of our airline, you have left us for ever,
And we, are deeper in sadness.

The legacy you leave behind for us,
It something we will always cherish,
Your "guiding principles" will inspire us,
To do, as you would wish.

With "deep thought and hard work",
You always strove for "excellence",
Serving "the needs of our country and people".
You have earned a rare eminence.

For all your "pat and honest means",
We - your admirer and endorser,
For you have really proven to be,
A precious - Jewel of India.

You've won a place in all our hearts,
And attained immortality,
May God bless you, Mr. J.R.D.,
On your Flight to Eternity.

