

Female airline captain a first

OSAKA (Kyodo) A copilot of JAL Express Co. became Japan's first female captain Friday after passing the government's qualification screening.

Ari Fuji, 42, is scheduled to make her maiden flight as a captain next Monday, from Osaka to Sendai, according to the airline, which is wholly owned by Japan Airlines International Co.

Fuji joined JAL Express in 1999 with both private and commercial pilot licenses and started flying as a copilot the following year.

It usually takes 10 years or so for copilots to be promoted to captain.

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Four-striper: JAL Express Co.'s Ari Fuji smiles Friday at the carrier's Ikeda, Osaka Prefecture, base after becoming Japan's first female captain. KYODO PHOTO

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