



Taslima Miji



A female employee at work in Gootipa's factory.

PHOTOS: SHAMS ASIF

Gootipa: Moving towards sustainable fashion

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Gootipa is an online shop by Leatherina Pvt Ltd, founded by Taslima Miji in 2016. It has introduced bags made with leather sourced from Bangladesh, along with local handmade fabric and jute. Considering the broader picture of our leather industry, Taslima wanted to contribute to our economy and at the same time, reach out to the global market. Before this, she ran Techmania, a venture dealing with computer hardware that supplied imported products to corporate offices though direct involvement in the distribution network. The showroom was shut down in 2017, as she wanted to focus more on Gootipa. Previously, Taslima was a journalist at *Prothom Alo* and *New Age*. She left journalism once she became a mother.

The name, Gootipa, stems from the fact that Taslima is a newcomer in the leather industry. Through unique designs, her brand blends global trends with the Bangladeshi culture. Although Gootipa has no employed designers as of now, Taslima follows online design schools regularly to maintain the exclusivity of her products. Currently, the enterprise has over 40 workers and exports their products to a number of fair trade brands in Europe.

A supporter of locally made products, Taslima wants to work with more handloom materials to revive the use of traditional fabrics. She believes that the leather industry in Bangladesh has tremendous potential for development. "Foreign buyers approach us regularly but we are lacking in production



Gootipa offers bags made with leather sourced from Bangladesh, along with local handmade fabric and jute.

proficiency. Government projects in the interest of exports are required, as they can generate immense employment opportunities," she said. According to the entrepreneur, for small-scale ventures to flourish, the exports of leather goods must be reduced, using various policies. This will provide our

local industries with ample time and opportunities to grow, before competing with foreign brands.

Besides ensuring quality, the enterprise maintains transparency about their production procedures, welcoming customers to visit their outlet and factory at Hazaribagh,

Dhaka. Furthermore, Gootipa follows the Fair Trade Policy by ensuring a fair wage and safe working environment for their workers. Along with that, Taslima promotes recruiting more female employees. Moving forward, she aims to improve and broaden Gootipa's product range and expand the business.



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YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES



Asia Youth Leader Culture Camp 2020 in Bandung, Indonesia

Asia Youth Leader Culture Camp 2020 is an experiential learning program designed for young people from different corners of the world. Asia Youth Leader Culture Camp highlights cross-cultural exchange, self-exploration, leadership development, public speaking class, global friendship, and collaboration. AYLCC is also a celebration of diversity, peace, and love. It's a beautiful deep diving journey self-discovery along with exploring the beauty, culture, and spirituality of the Land of Kahuripan, Bandung Indonesia.

DEADLINE: February 20, 2020 | Exchange Program

Diversity and Inclusion Youth Conference 2020 in Malaysia

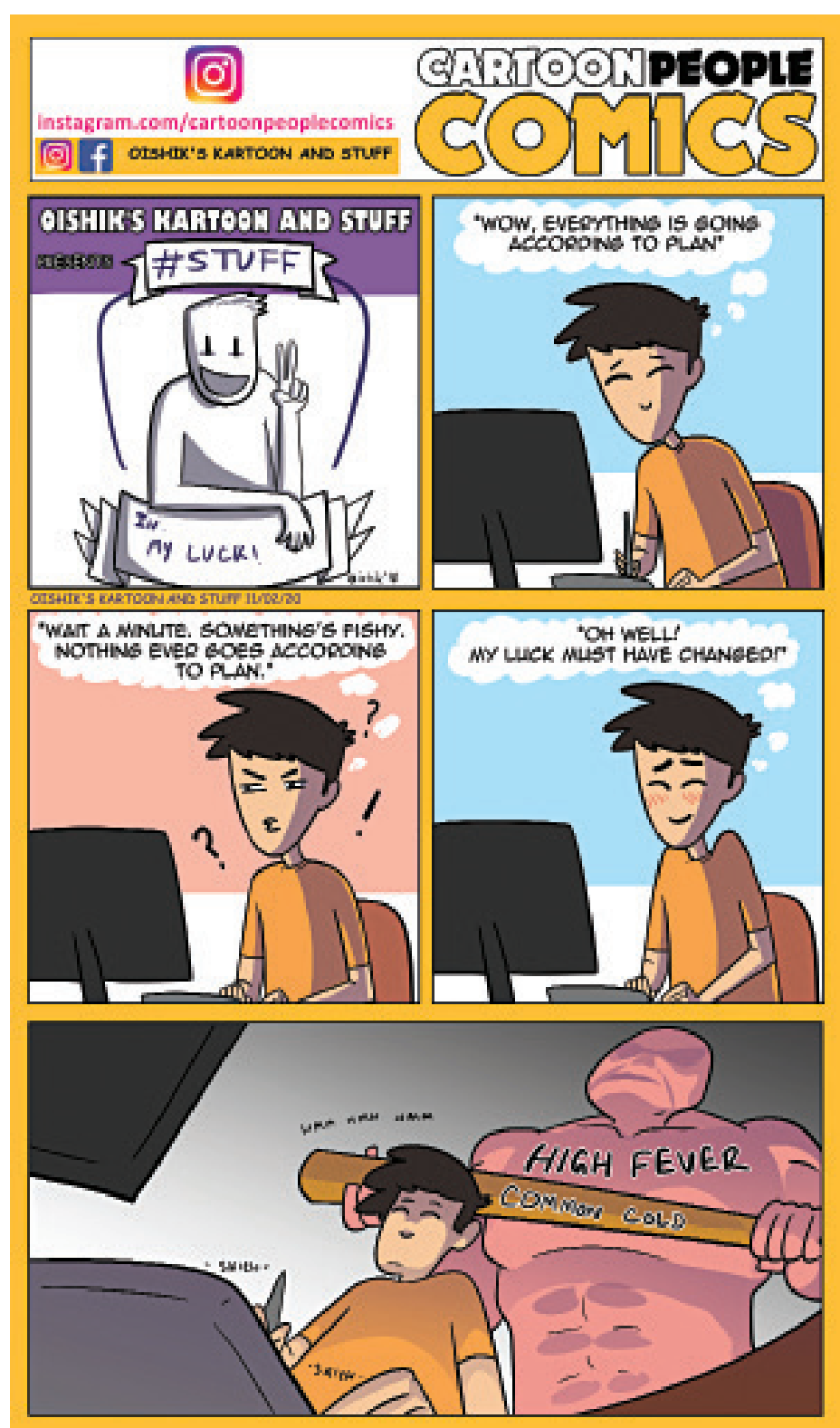
The DIYC Conference 2020 is a three-day youth conference inspired by the Model United Nations proceedings (MUN procedure) which form a key milestone and a biennial event of the movement. Covering issues such as world politics, international relations, and justice, participants will be given the opportunity to test their leadership skills, debate current issues, deliver speeches, draft resolutions, make executive decisions, and realize through experience the complexities of managing diversity in an international relations setting.

DEADLINE: March 05, 2020 | Conference

Australia Awards Scholarship 2021 for Bangladeshi Students

Australia Awards Scholarships are long-term development awards administered by the Australian Government. The study and research opportunities provided by Australia Awards Scholarships develop recipients' skills and knowledge and help them build networks to drive change and contribute to development.

DEADLINE: April 30, 2020 | Scholarship



Taking debate to new heights

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

In recent years, Bangladesh has seen many young debaters impress the audience with their wit and talent. Sourodip Paul and Sajid Khandaker of Team IBA DU A secured the 11th ranking among 434 teams from more than 350 universities in this year's World Universities Debating Championship (WUDC), which is considered the World Cup of Debate in Thailand. Bangladesh's performance this year was the best one so far.

'Khandaker and Paul', their official team name, became an undeniable duo in debating tournaments. Together, they have won 11 major championships so far. Their WUDC journey started back in 2018 with WUDC, Mexico. They participated in WUDC South Africa in the following year. They secured the 17th position in Mexico and the 23rd position in South Africa last year. They were announced as the best team in Asia, both in Mexico and Thailand this year.

Sajid has been a debater since he was a ninth grader. From participating in the World Schools Debating Championships to WUDC, his passion for debate grew over the years. "I had some of the best debaters as my professional trainers back in my school days, which made my transition to international competitions easier," shares Sajid.

While Sajid had professional help in his debating career, Sourodip's went through several individual struggles. He got into debating seriously when he was a student at Notre Dame College and participated in several activities after getting into IBA. In his first year, Sourodip won Creadive, an inter university business case competition organised by BUP and in his final year, he won Battle of Minds, an inter university business competition arranged by British American Tobacco (BAT) Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's first major breakthrough in WUDC was in 2015 in Berlin, where BRAC University and IBA DU's performances established a solid reputation for our country in the international debate circuit.



Sajid and Sourodip from 'Khandaker and Paul'.

PHOTO: COURTESY

"Previously, there were biases against accents, different backgrounds and some form of structural racism in the international debating scene. However, gradually, the international debating society has become more open and accepting of different people," shares Sourodip.

"Years of participating and performing greatly in international tournaments finally established Bangladesh's strong position internationally. It would not come as a surprise if Bangladesh wins WUDC now," says Sajid.

Debating requires a huge amount of time and sacrifice than any other competition, and those who have an affinity for debating are more concerned about trophies and achievements. Sajid and Sourodip's advice to the next

generation of debaters is to create their own style. "Debate is a mental game and creativity has a major role in it. Developing your unique style is more important than bagging trophies," says Sajid. On the other hand, Sourodip believes that regardless of their achievements, people will remember both of them for their unique style of debating.

Sourodip is leaving for Australia to pursue his higher studies in Economics soon. He is an avid fan of standup comedy and the football team, Manchester United. Sajid, on the other hand, is in his final year at IBA and is passionate about political philosophy and Liverpool. The duo have truly changed the debating standards in Bangladesh.