



**Maki rolls and prawn tempuras are popular dishes at Oshi Sushis.**



**Chef Juwel at work in Oshi Sushis.**

PHOTOS: **MONON MUNTAKA**



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## YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

## Youth Opportunities Campus Ambassador Program 2021

Youth Opportunities is launching the 3rd season of its Campus Ambassador Program for the aspiring youth of Bangladesh. The program aims at empowering the youth as changemakers in their institutions to promote different aspects of global and local opportunities among their fellow students so that they can avail of these opportunities and transform them into successes.

**DEADLINE:** November 20, 2020 | Volunteer Service



## Global Ambassador Program 2021

The Global Ambassador Program is one of the most engaging programs of Youth Opportunities. It has engaged youth from more than 130 countries in the world with its first-ever appearance in 2018. After getting a huge amount of response in the last cohort, we are back again with this amazing opportunity for you to become part of the global youth community.

**DEADLINE:** November 15, 2020 | Miscellaneous

1,000 Dreams Fund Twitch BroadcastHER Grant 2020

1DF created a grant specifically to support women broadcasters on Twitch. The 1,000 Dreams Fund Twitch BroadcastHER Grant provides financial assistance to eligible women to help with expenses such as travel to gaming conventions, educational conferences, hardware upgrades, and instructional programs related to creative or artistic pursuits. This grant is not intended for everyday expenses (e.g., utility bills, food costs) or costs related to medical care.

**DEADLINE:** November 21, 2020 | Grants

# The resilient journey of Chef Juwel and Oshi Sushis

**ZAREEN NAWAR**

In March this year, young chef Juwel Khan was laid off from Tao Town, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Subsequently, instead of switching careers, he started his own online shop, Oshi Sushis, over two months back.

The word 'Oshi' means to push an opponent down during sumo wrestling. Juwel learned the word while working at Sumo Sushi, and decided to name his shop accordingly.

He arrived in Dhaka from his hometown Bholia in 2004, in pursuit of a job he can learn and adapt to. His professional career took off as a kitchen helper at the Dhaka-based Korean restaurant, Anirang. He has been in the food industry for around ten years, and he has been working as a chef since the past six years. He started off with cooking barbeque meals mostly, but after finding the opportunity to learn to make sushi, he never looked back. Throughout the years, he has worked at ten restaurants.

Juwel explained that the network among chefs is significant to learning cooking and finding jobs in the industry. "I had the



### Chef Juwel Khan

chance to learn from a Korean chef and chef Gautom, a trusted acquaintance of mine. However, I have learnt the most about cooking from my brother, Abul Kalam Rana, who worked at the restaurant Umai for a long time," he says. "Rana has also worked in Nigeria and Afghanistan and he is currently helping me to run Oshi Sushis. My other brother is also a chef and he is a part of the shop as well."

Juwel experienced discrepancy in the form of unreasonable working hours as an assistant chef, while the head chefs could come and leave like clockwork. He also faced negligence in the care for chefs during the pandemic, until he was let go from Tao Town.

Now, as the owner of a food outlet himself, Juwel supports several others who lost their jobs due to the Covid-19 crisis by giving them a place to work and showcase their culinary skills. He ensures equivalent working hours for all the staff members. Oshi Sushis also rented a proper commercial kitchen recently. Three people work in the kitchen while two others handle the delivery process. They also have freelance drivers for the home deliveries. Orders have

been pouring in at Oshi Sushis since their inception, and for Juwel, the success has been exciting and humbling.

He further explained that the palate of Bangladeshis is inclined more towards the Asian fusion maki, as opposed to the authentic Japanese and Korean sushi. "My priority for now is to provide customers with the best Asian fusion maki, knowing that I had done the same as one of the founding chefs of Sushi Samurai four years ago," he adds. However, I am able to do so at a more reasonable price with Oshi Sushis."

When asked about places he would like to learn more from, the young chef said that he would like to visit Japan, the birth place of sushi, to expand his knowledge of the cuisine.

Moving forward, Juwel dreams of turning his online business into a proper restaurant. He hopes for Oshi Sushis to do better after the pandemic subsidies, since sales in the industry have been struggling. He may not be earning as much as he used to for now, but his aspirations, humility and experience are pivotal in leading him to success.



# PRACHETA AHANA ALAM

An outspoken, unapologetic  
storyteller

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

*From a young age, Pracheta Ahana Alam was inspired to dream bigger, think of new possibilities and fight harder against self-doubt. In an intimate conversation, she shares the stories of her life.*



**Pracheta directed the music video for Old Dhaka Diaries' rendition of 'Ekla Cholo Re'.**

the Arts London (UAL). She was, however, compelled to drop out of St Andrews. "Education doesn't have to be confined in any institution. If one seeks knowledge, it can be earned practically from anywhere," she asserts. Currently, she is studying at OCA, the distance learning arm of University for the Creative Arts, UK.

Throughout the years, Pracheta not only faced social stigmas but also struggled with her mental health. Refusing to categorise herself as a troubled artiste, she treats her mental health battles as just another part of her daily life. She feels that the media often romanticises mental health issues and firmly believes that people must address it with care. "The cry for help must come from within, but medical aid is also required," she adds. Against the odds, Pracheta keeps pushing her limits.

Crediting theatre as her stepping-stone in the field of art, she recalls how it offered her different perspectives on life. "Theatre allowed me to truly understand direction," she says. Her influences in theatre include Bertolt Brecht, Antoine Artaud and Akram Khan.

In the world of films, Pracheta adores the works of Satyajit Ray and Tareque Masud. She also mentions that director Rubaiyat Hossain has influenced her immensely.

Pracheta's video productions include indie films, animations and music videos that have travelled across the globe, collecting prestigious accolades from more than 50 festivals.

Yet, it is not the bigger accolades, but the comparatively smaller recognitions that fuel Pracheta's practice. For example, when she produced the Tagore play titled, "Sacrifice" in a multicultural setting, it was nominated for Best Costume or Writing for Worthy Books Poetry Slam Championship. The recognition gave her an immense sense of satisfaction.

She also runs an organisation called Women in Arts, Bangladesh, which aims to create a safe, supportive space and network for women vested in creative arts, as hobbyists, professionals, or otherwise. Currently, she is working on a film, which reflects the reactions of people to her hair. "Comments from people on appearances can be traumatising. I will be addressing the issue on my film," says Pracheta. Her outspoken, unapologetic personality makes her stand out from the crowd. As the idea of becoming a multidisciplinary artist can be overwhelming, for those who are wondering how to succeed in the field, Pracheta has one message - "You must stay committed."