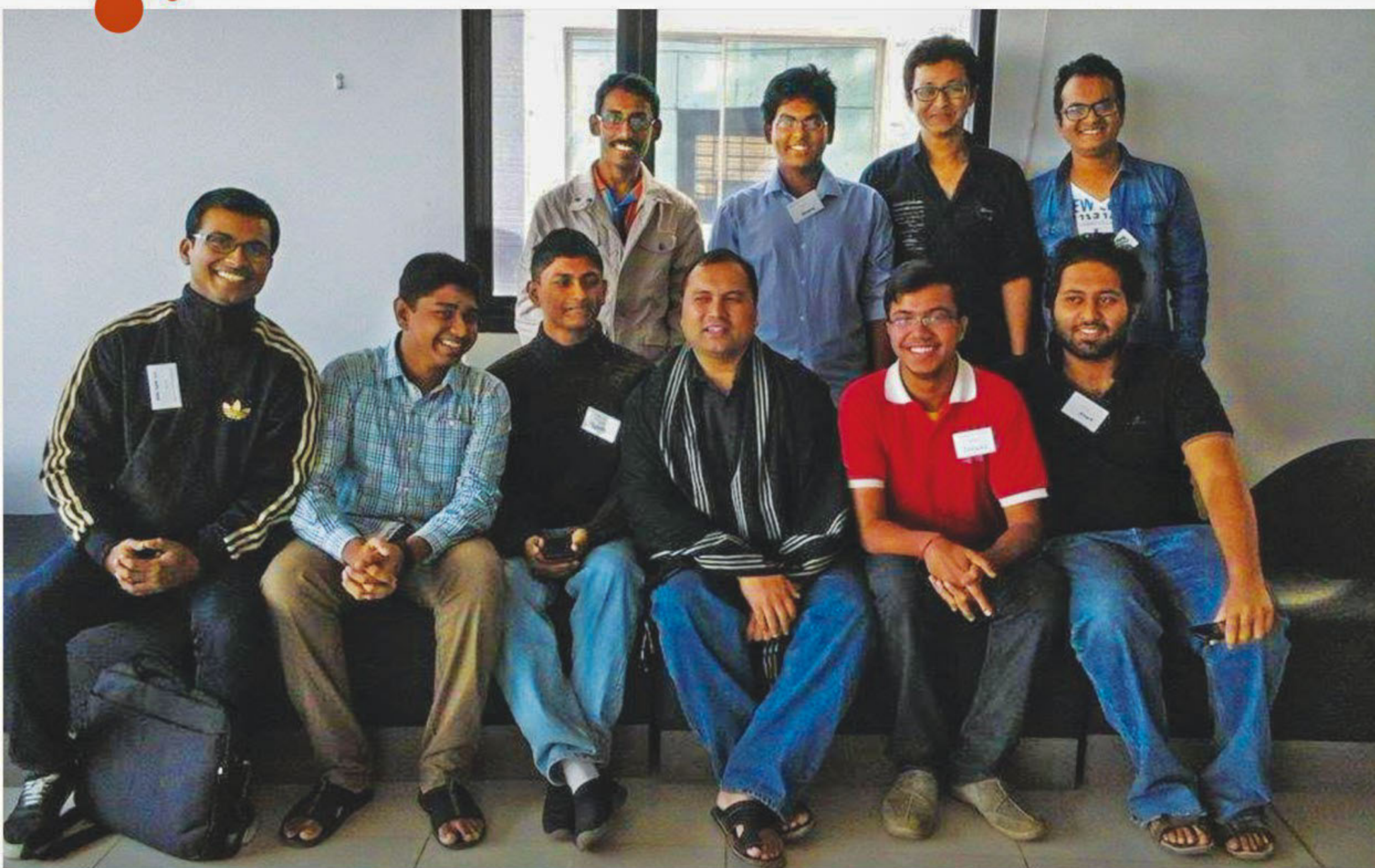


Dhaka MOOCXCHANGE

Online classrooms



ISHRAT JAHAN

In Bangladesh, where degrees are valued in terms of the best jobs they can bring, who would want a degree on the genesis of rock and roll?

It turns out quite a few would.

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) are free, university level courses that can be accessed by anyone with an internet connection. MOOCs are not a new concept and have been around for quite a few years, encouraging debates about the future of higher education. It has been at a global tug of war with universities that question the effectiveness and quality of online classrooms.

Dhaka MOOC Exchange is an online community on Facebook, made up of existing MOOCs students in Dhaka. It was founded by Cal Jahan, Mainul Hasan Alin and Shah Yasser Aziz. The commu-

nity began with three members and a need to create a social network of MOOC takers. Mainul is working as a sell side analyst and studying to be a Data Scientist, taking several MOOCs on Data Science and Startup Engineering at the moment. Yasser is getting a bachelor's degree in EEE and took his first MOOC back in 2011. And Cal Jahan was introduced to MOOCs via Coursera.



"The main impetus of creating Dhaka MOOC Exchange was to form a social network of MOOC takers. Besides, there was no MOOC based organisation in Dhaka, or Bangladesh for that matter. We knew that there was demand for such a group.

Additionally, there was no advocacy group that promoted MOOCs, so we naturally filled the void," says Cal Jahan.

The group currently has over 800 members, who post about courses. It functions to share education resources through crowd sourcing, help cultivate a culture of online education and to promote/support



MOOC enthusiasts. They have also held in-person "salon meetings" where they exchange resources and hold discussions.

"The future of MOOCs in Bangladesh looks promising; its high quality education is mostly for free. So we make it a point to support the cultural acceptance of MOOCs," says Cal.

However, the concept of free and high quality education looks best in theory only. MOOCs require a greater deal of motivation and presence of mind than regular college courses. The only things that can drive one to take and finish a course are self-motivation and the urge to learn.

But the benefits far outweigh the costs.

MOOCs have the advantage of being high quality and free: two things which are hard to find together in Bangladesh. Add to that the fact that one is learning with a global community. This allows you to see many different viewpoints and make friends all across the world.

MOOCs are offered by the best universities in the world, here are a few MOOC websites you could take a look at:

Coursera (<https://www.coursera.org/>) A social entrepreneurship company that partners with the top universities in the world to offer courses online for anyone to take. They offer courses from Stanford, CalTech, Princeton and many more institutions.

EdX (<http://www.edxonline.org/>) EdX is a joint partnership between The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University to offer online learning to millions of people around the world for free.

iversity (<https://iversity.org/>) is a European online education platform and has a user base of 600,000 online learners, enrolled in 63 courses offered by 41 partner universities.

MITx (<http://mitx.mit.edu/>) MITx offers a portfolio of MIT courses for free to a virtual community of learners around the world.

IS YOUR BODY READY?

Chest press

If you're just starting out and just want to build up your chest, then I'd recommend you do about 8 sets of chest press for 5 to 8 reps each. Use the most weight you can without having to break form. Proper form helps you prevent injuries and get the most out of your workout. Here are a few pointers:

- Contract your scapula, and maintain that contraction throughout.

- Keep your lower back slightly off the bench.
- Keep your elbows at an angle to your shoulder, roughly in line with your diaphragm. Don't keep your elbows in line with your shoulder! That will mess up your shoulders.
- Try to keep your wrist straight, it'll work on forearms and lower the strain on your wrist when you move on to heavier weights.
- If you keep an open grip, when you get sweaty the bar could slip and fall on you.

How to Cross the Street

You'll be surprised to know how many people are scared of crossing the street, or don't know how to properly do so. Do NOT jaywalk or make a run for it. Look at either side of the street before crossing it, because in Bangladesh, people often drive on the "wrong side." Take off your earphones before crossing the street. It's always a good idea to wait for all the vehicles to pass before you cross. If you're not sure when to, stick to a group of people crossing. NEVER make a run for it. It's better to be late than dead.

