

Remembering Beyblade

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Rewind time to a decade ago when we had limited access to multimedia entertainment, when most of our schedules were seized by study books and homeworks, and getting to watch our favourite shows on TV was something we'd be looking forward to all day; when *Beyblade* was still airing and the talk of the town, at least in the world of the lively, high-spirited youth. *Beyblade*, known in Japan as *Bakuten Shūto Beiburēdo*, is a Japanese manga series written and illustrated by Takao Aoki centring on the game of spinning tops called "Beyblades". The anime adaption of *Beyblade* had been one of those colourful, millennial-themed, Cartoon Network series many of us grew up watching that struck a chord with us. Some of the things we'd likely always reminisce about *Beyblade* include —

The beyblades: And the merchandise too. With the show at its prime, most of the retail shops would be lined up with *Beyblade* merchandises. There used to be children of all ages out in the school corridors and canteen floors trying out their newly bought beyblades, comparing the launchers and showing off their makeshift beyblade arenas, which would often be plastic or metal dishes, sometimes even steel pots taken from the kitchen.

The mania: Be it for the characters, the animation, the story, or even merely the hype, *Beyblade* had been one of the most popular shows targeted for the youngsters. There were girls debating over the strongest beyblader in the show, there were boys using pens to have bey-battles in class, there were sing-along sessions during the intense fight scenes when the background music blared out and seemingly no end to the craze.



The soundtrack: The soundtrack of the show was (and still is) a fan favourite. Along with knowing all the songs by heart, fans would form playlists according to ratings, research the artists and break down lyrics. Some songs frequently recommended and worth trying would be 'Rise above the Storm', 'Swing Low', 'All across the Nation' and of course, the theme song from the first series.

The friends: It wasn't rare to bump into strangers only to find out they were fans of *Beyblade* too back then. It helped to overlook the class groupings, conflicts, and petty fights; awkward meetings were less awkward and finding conversations starters were easier. This show linked a lot of lives and opened a gateway for new friendships that lasted years.



The lessons: It may have been a short-lived phase, but it had an impact that most of us who watched it took with us along the years as we grew up. In terms of content, it was more or less the same as any other anime series we used to watch when we were little, highlighting courage, hope, perseverance and the value of friends and family. But even so, *Beyblade* still connected with the audience, became a committed medium to put every message across with sincerity and heart, and remains to this day a cherished memory for fans.

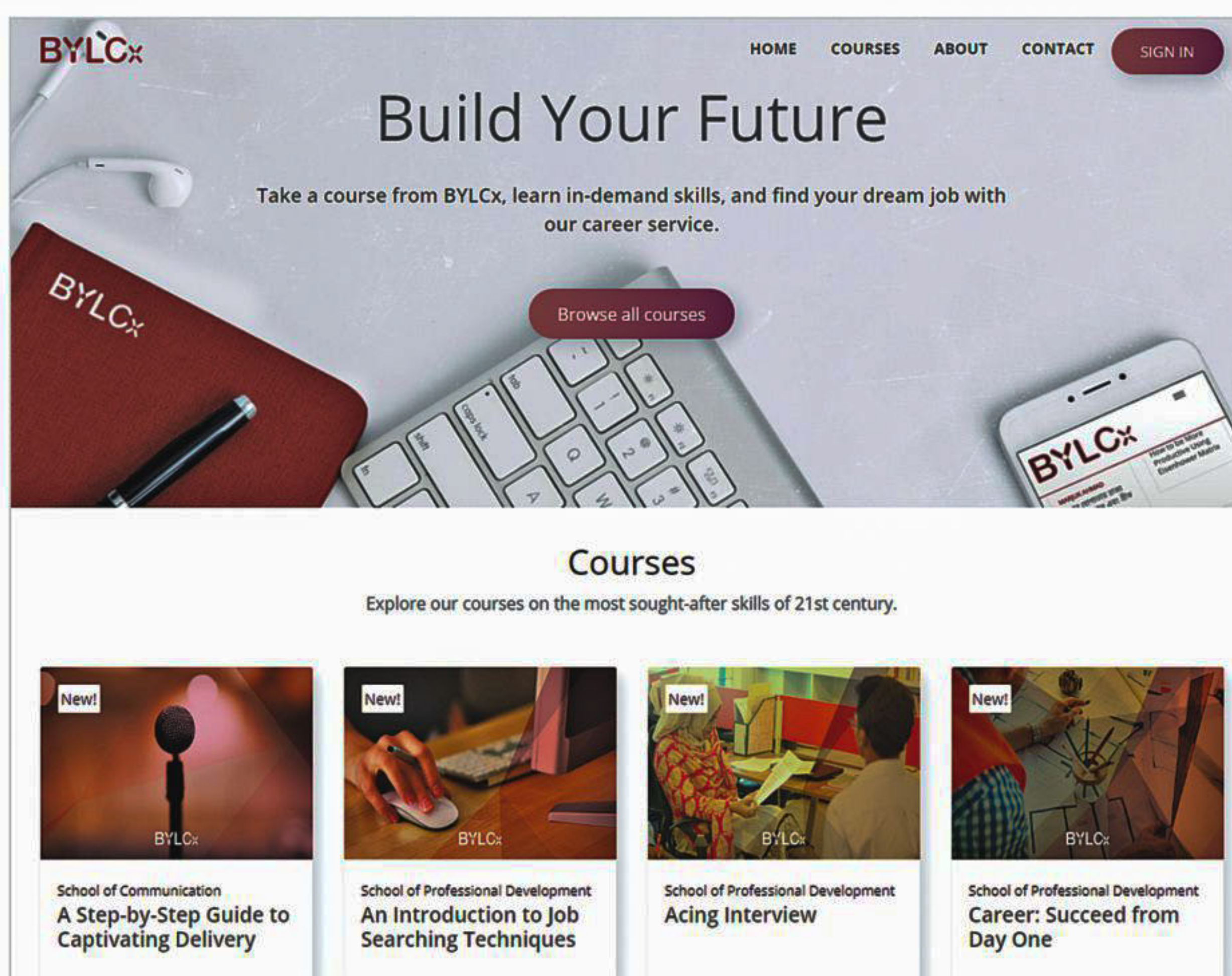
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BYLCx: A new spin on online education

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Online learning has always been a mixed bag in Bangladesh. Even though there are platforms that are doing well, there are few who can be comprehensive in what they teach due to the very nature of the product. This is where BYLCx comes in. This is BYLC's (Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center) online platform, which has recently been revamped to include 25 full-fledged courses.

BYLCx provides the opportunity to learn in-demand skills to mitigate the discrepancies between skills employers want and skills potential employees have. The website is specifically designed with the user in mind, with the courses neatly



placed inside widgets concurring to the "School" that they belong to. For now, BYLC has made registration free. I took the opportunity to start out with the School of Communication, where the course was 'A Step by Step Guide to Captivating Delivery'. The ease of enrolment in the website is what I had previ-

ously found lacking in previous website-based endeavours. Two minutes into the registration page, I already had an account and had access to all their available courses. Any of my remaining scepticism vanished when I started the course. The schools are headed by capable individuals with the highest qualifications in

their field. Almeer Ahsan Asif, the course staff for this particular school was eloquent and articulate. To my disappointment, however, many of the courses that I was interested in had not begun yet, but a very convenient countdown timer is available to let users know when they will be online.

Offline support will also be available to the premium users of this website. All of the users, however, will have their subsequent skills evaluated with quizzes, trivia and more. This will help the platform to give recognition to the learners who have successfully completed their comprehensive courses, the statistics of which will also be made available to potential employers.

The website promises a lot to the ones eager to learn at the ease of a click. The curators claim that it has been optimised to run on very minimal data usage, resulting in ease of access from even remote areas of the country. Personally, I feel like this is a project which promises a lot, but there is still a long way to go considering the parent company's lofty ambitions: namely convincing employers that these skills will have real-world usage in their institutions. However, there is no doubt that these courses will achieve what they have set out to do: educate.

To find out more about BYLCx and their courses, visit x.bylc.org