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Warrior Women Bangladesh: taking a leap forward

SHARMIN JOYA

How often do you read or hear about incidents of sexual harassment in our country? The number of cases is on the rise, and it is terrifying. In the hopes to combat these occurrences, Mashroof Hossain, a Bangladeshi police officer and Abdullah Mohammad Hossain, a martial arts veteran with three decades of experience, together started the project Warrior Women Bangladesh in September 2017.

"I have been raised by a strong woman. My mother is a fitness instructor by profession. She instilled the idea of strong women in my mind from my early days," states Mashroof. "The 2015 incident of mass sexual harassment that was perpetrated during Pohela Boishakh celebrations at TSC enraged me. That is when I decided that I should do something about it."

Since then, Mashroof began sharing different ideas on self-defence, trying to boost confidence in women, through social media platforms. The immense response he received from students, home-makers and service holders,

further encouraged him.

When Abdullah approached Mashroof, the Warrior Women Bangladesh project began to take shape. The joint venture is run by Abdullah in his KO Fight Studio in Gulshan, which is registered under the World Karate Organisation Bangladesh. He has also been the country representative of the organisation since 2017. The professional martial artist has three black belts, and will be receiving his fourth this year. The studio offers full contact karate, Shinkyokushin, for students.

"I planned on a short course for women's self-defence which would cover the basic techniques," says Abdullah. "When the 'warriors' share their stories of fighting back, in the group we have on social media, I cannot explain in words how proud it makes us feel. It makes all the trouble we have faced to reach this stage worthwhile."

The project inspires women to overcome their fears. During the course, they are encouraged to break free of social stigmas, which often hinder their ability to feel confident and powerful.

"Breaking the mindset was the biggest challenge for us. Patriarchal beliefs are deeply rooted in the very core of our social structure," explains Mashroof. "By establishing Warrior Women Bangladesh, we have taken a step forward in addressing the pressing issue of sexual harassment in Bangladesh. We are proud to hear reports of our students standing up against domestic abuse after completing their training."

Mashroof is currently studying at Harvard University. Upon returning to Bangladesh, he plans to extend their project to rural areas where circumstances are often more severe.

"To create mass awareness, we need sponsors. Only social media is not enough, as it will not reach the masses, especially those in the rural areas," asserts Abdullah. "If educational institutions, garment factory owners, women healthcare organisations, and even NGOs work on this, it will be easier for us to provide the course at a low cost or even free for the underprivileged. This way our goal of empowering women through self-defence will be accomplished."



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Mir Rasel: The Young Digital Marketing Expert

24 year old Mir Rasel from Bagha Upazila, Rajshahi is currently completing his final year at Jahangirnagar University (JU), in Urban and Regional Planning. He did not have access to early education and credits his uncle for playing a major role in shaping his life. Nominated as Rajshahi's iGenius twice, he was always enthusiastic about information and technology alongside institutional education.

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

In 2013, Mir Rasel established the website rajshahiexpress.com, the first internet media of the division where he had compiled all information related to Rajshahi in one portal. "With increasing access to the internet, people can visit our online newspaper for all headlines revolving around Rajshahi," expresses Rasel.

As a digital specialist at Alibaba Group, one of the largest e-commerce platforms worldwide, Rasel remotely worked with product operations, branding and the marketing team, and was responsible for social media management, including Facebook content planning. He organised numerous online campaigns for Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Vietnam, to attract visitors.

"Alibaba helped me foster my marketing skills, as I did in-depth research on target groups and devised ways to integrate local and international cultures," explains Rasel. He is also the Brand Ambassador for UC Browser, and has built users' communities in various universities as a community leader. He also helped UC Browser launch their first TVC in Bangladesh, which is recognized as one of the most successful campaigns in the country.

Furthermore, the young digital marketing expert played a major role in the execution of Jobike, the country's first bicycle sharing startup at the JU campus. While working as the campus



PHOTO: SHAMS ASIF

lead, he monitored the operations and sales for the company. Rasel has also written a number of technical blogs on a variety of subjects which were self-taught with help from the internet. His other ventures include Dokandars, an e-commerce platform which aims to provide quality products at lowered prices and BD Places, a travel vlog based website.

In order to pursue his dreams, Rasel wishes to go to China with a scholarship for further studies in the field of digital business. After that, he intends to come back to Bangladesh and work in the agricultural development sector.



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Bangladesh 4th National Youth Conference on Family Planning 2019

After huge successes in the past three seasons of National Youth Conference focusing on family planning, SRHR, and health issues of young people in 2016, 2017 and 2018 we are delighted to announce the Bangladesh 4th National Youth Conference on Family Planning this year from October 20-21, 2019 in Dhaka. DEADLINE: August 14, 2019 | Conference

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A research competition to be held as a chance for undergraduates to develop as AGENTS OF CHANGE. This activity is a manifestation of awareness of the development of science and technology in Indonesia and is expected to enhance the development of research from students, in the field of Chemical Engineering. DEADLINE: July 7, 2019 | Competition

Youth Entrepreneurship Workshop 2019 in Netherlands

Youth Entrepreneurship Workshop is a great opportunity to learn how to create a business from your ideas! We will teach you how to choose a business model, write a business plan, look for finances and a lot more! This course is a great opportunity for aspiring businessmen to learn the skills and acquire the knowledge needed for the development of their own business! DEADLINE: July 10, 2019 | Workshop