

NURTURING DREAMS

Diya's determined aim



Diya Siddique

PHOTO: COURTESY

7ΔΡΕΝΙ ΝΙΔΙΜΑΡ

Young archer Diya Siddique was eliminated from the women's recurve singles after putting up a brilliant fight in the shoot-off stage of 2020 Tokyo Olympics. She might have missed out on the gold medal, but she fared well against Karyna Dziominskaya of Belarus.

Prior to being scouted for the Olympics, she won a gold medal in recurve women's singles in 2019 during the 3rd ISSF Solidarity Archery Championship. She made history by reaching the finals of the 2021 Archery World Cup in May, alongside fellow archer Mohammed Ruman Shana, who is one of her role models. The duo won a silver medal in the recurve mixed team event of the tournament.

Diya grew up in Nilphamari until she got the opportunity to join Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan (BKSP). Initially, her family was not supportive of her ambitions to attend BKSP, until her father stepped up for her. Diya has been learning archery since 2017. She believes that practice and consistency are crucial in this field.

In her journey towards getting to where she is today, she received immense support from her coach Martin Friedrich, her BKSP coaches Nur Alam and Ziaul Haque, and her father, in particular. "As of now, I am focusing on my studies, but I plan to participate in the 2024 Olympics," Diya said about her future plans.

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Tanjim Tabassum Orthi

AZIBOR RAHMAN, FROM JHENIDAH

Twenty-year-old Tanjim Tabassum Orthi won 11 national awards in singing from 2013 to 2019. Besides being a singer, she hopes to be a BCS cadre.

The talented girl is the daughter of Md Parvage Imam of Madanmohonpara in Jhenidah. He is a lecturer of English at Harinakundo Saleha Begum Degree College.

Orthi began learning music from the age of eight. Noted artistes Motalib Biswas (Kushtia), Jakir Hasan Rumi, Ajoy Das, and Tapash Datta (India) have been her teachers.

Distinguished Nazrul Sangeet exponent Sujit Mustafa praised Orthi as a promising singer, who understands the nuances of music.

Orthi passed her SSC exams with GPA-5, as an arts student, from Jhenidah Government Secondary Girls School in 2018. She obtained GPA-5 in her HSC exams from Government Nurunnahar Mohila College, Jhenidah. Now, she is studying at home for admission in

PHOTO: STAR

She got a gold medal in Classical Sangeet in 2013 at Jatio Shishu Purashkar Protijogita. In 2014, she got three gold medals in Rabindra, Nazrul, and Classical Sangeet. The same year, she received a gold medal in Classical Sangeet at the golden jubilee programme of Bangladesh Television (BTV).

Besides, she got another gold medal in 2016 in Classical Sangeet in Jatio Shikkha Sapta and in 2017, she received a gold medal in Nazrul Sangeet from Jatio Shishu Purashkar Protijogita. In 2019, she got another gold medal in Classical Sangeet from Jatio Shishu Purashkar Protijogita. She was enlisted as a singer for BTV in 2020.

Orthi said that her father's contribution in her pursuit of music has been immense. She is inspired by singers Rashid Khan, Ajoy Chakrabarty, Kaushik Chakrabarty, and Priyanka Gope.

YOUTH IN ACTION

Promoting self-reliance for rural communities

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Founded in 2016, Dreamunteers is a social organisation that intends to create a platform for rural communities to have sustainable and self-reliant ways of living. The founder of the organisation, Nibrasul Alam, a student of Notre Dame College, was selected for the Sir Fazle Hasan Abed Ashoka Young Changemakers 2020.

Being an active member of the Bangladesh Scouts, Nibrasul had the opportunity to explore several hill districts and remote villages. The experience shaped his understanding about the lives of the people in such areas. He discovered that many were migrating to urban areas in search of work, since they were unable to find employment in their own communities.

"The main aim of Dreamunteers is to help people in rural areas to meet their basic needs independently. We want to make their dreams come true," Nibrasul shared. Dreamunteers involves local leaders, maps out the everyday challenges of rural communities and assesses the willingness of communities to adapt to different environments for their project plans.

They have facilitated the education of over 120 children in rural regions. They have also ensured that rural communities have access to clean drinking water and proper sanitation. Since its inception, Dreamunteers has provided their services to 1,500 people across the country.

Their enterprise, Arora Agri Industries, has a cheese factory in Chattogram, which helps in building employment opportunities. "Arora will not be confined to just the cheese



Nibrasul Alam

factory as we intend to expand and include a biofloc fish plant, factories for agro food, dairy, fertilisers and pesticides," said Yasir Bin Taleb, Cofounder, Dreamunteers.

The organisation's other

enterprises include NURI Rural
Garments, a clothing brand and industry employing more than 100 people. Additionally, their 4X Rural Development Research Centre is currently working on a plan to develop neglected rural areas.

Dreamunteers also runs a medicine

bank that provides free medicines to underprivileged communities. Their Project Change 365 surveys villages to effectively identify major problems, and propose solutions. "We are also working on a speedboat ambulance service in some islands, and conducting medical camps in inaccessible hill districts," added Nibrasul.

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Team members of Dreamunteers at a discussion for Project Change 365, which surveys villages to identify major problems and propose effective solutions.

PHOTO: COURTESY



Health disparities of transgender youth: Still left in the lurch

NILIMA JAHAN

30-year-old Mugdha* a transgender woman of Rajshahi, still depends on traditional healers or dispensaries when she feels unwell, considering the disparities she faces at hospitals.

Once when she went to Rajshahi Medical College with a urinary tract infection, she was mistreated so badly that she felt like she had no right to medical treatment.

"Since there's no separate queue for transgender people like me, I stood in the female queue to buy a ticket, as I identify myself as female. However, other women in the queue were scared of me," she said. "When I stood in the queue for males, the men were taunting me. The doctor was visibly agitated to have a transgender patient like me. She hurriedly wrote down a prescription, and threw it at me, without looking at me, or listening to any of my problems."

When Mugdha asked the doctor's assistant for help, he harassed her by asking her inappropriate questions about her gender and sexuality.

The situation is similar in the capital. When Bijli Chowdhury*, a transgender youth volunteer, went to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College for dengue fever tests, she was also asked irrelevant questions by the staff, and blamed for roaming around the roads and parks.

According to a 2019 survey by Bandhu Social Welfare Society, 90 percent of transgender people face mental and sexual harassment when they go to seek health services. 88 percent

of them said that sexual and reproductive health needs are not often addressed for them.

In addition, 82 percent of them said hospital authorities do not allow them in women's wards, since women do not feel comfortable in their presence, while in men's wards, they face sexual harassment. 73 percent of them said they do not have access to public health services.

Although transgender people can access reproductive healthcare services from 128 drop-in-centres run by the National AIDS/STI Programme (NASP) under Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), data showed that only 39.8 percent of them fall under the coverage of different services by the programme.

According to government data, Bangladesh has about 11,000 *hijras*, as transgender people are known in South Asia, even though, other estimates put the number at more than 50,000.

"In advocacy meetings with government bodies, we are told that the government facilities are bound to provide services to all, regardless of gender. But the reality is often disappointing. Staffers in hospitals are yet to be sensitised in treating transgender people due to lack of proper orientations," noted Dr Mashiur Rahman, Advocacy Manager of Bandhu Social Welfare Society.

Appropriate infrastructure, including separate queues and wards, is necessary to ensure that the transgender population can access healthcare services properly, he added.

Samiul Alam Shammi, a successful transgender entrepreneur and transgender rights activist said that hospital staff, doctors, nurses, and other patients, need to be respectful towards transgender people.

Notably, Prof Dr Md Shamiul Islam, Line Director, TB-Lep and NASP of DGHS, said that the district and upazila hospitals are open for people of all genders, and there's no specific bar for the transgender population. However, if they feel uncomfortable seeking services, they can receive services from the drop-in centres, he said.

In addition, Dr Nurun Nahar Begum, Line Director of Clinical Contraception Services Delivery Program of Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP), runs a project which provides services for those transgender individuals who identify themselves as women. Those who identify themselves as male can also avail counselling services from the staffers.

"However, individuals are either registered as male or female, as they do not have any medical identification of their gender. If there's any system of providing them with certificates regarding their gender identification, it would be easier for us to provide them with the required services," she added.

Dr Mohammed Sharif, Director, (MCH-Services) and Line Director of MCRAH, DGFP, added that DGFP has established 1103 adolescent-friendly health services centres in the country, where adolescents of all genders can access services.

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