



ILLUSTRATION: TASHFIA SHAMIM/THE NOBODY'S GALLERY

GUIDES

# 5 realistic resolutions FOR 2022

**January is the perfect time for New Year's resolutions. As we step into 2022, let's set some realistic goals.**

SHANIZ CHOWDHURY

**Ditch your phone before bedtime**

Like a devoted guard dog, your phone probably never leaves your side. But using the phone before bedtime can be detrimental to your vision as well as your brain. You consume enough information, entertainment and blue light during the day. Give yourself at least a 30-minute break from scrolling and texting when you're about to hit the hay. Putting your phone on "Do not disturb mode" or in a different room can help you limit screen time before bed.

**Track your budget**

Do you constantly feel like you're broke? One way to be sensible about your spendings is to save a certain amount of money each month before any discretionary expenses such as

eating at restaurants and/or subscribing to various streaming services. Envisioning what you're saving up for – whether it is a new smart phone or a friends' trip – will keep your feet on the ground as it motivates you to keep your eyes on the prize.

**Set aside some alone time**

Pry yourself away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. If all those hours watching Mr Bean in your childhood taught you anything, let it be that there's no greater happiness than to enjoy one's company. Read a book, do your elaborate skincare, rewatch a series, make a TikTok video – the list is endless.

**Exercise**

Start both physical and mental exercises. Solving a crossword will help you as a 20-minute walk on your terrace. Just don't give up the habit of exercise. Your resolutions

are not about crossing fingers and throwing pennies in a fountain. So it doesn't matter if you take baby steps as long as they are successive steps throughout the year.

**Treat people (yourself included) with kindness**

The only way to persevere through adversity is by practicing random acts of kindness. Even if the world tries to drag you down, do not pursue malice. For the sake of your well-being, nurture yourself into a happier, more fulfilled version of you by investing time in your passions. So when your cup is full, you can pour the love for others. Remember, kindness has a ripple effect.

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Md Jahirul Islam.

## NURTURING DREAMS Championing employment opportunities for teens

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Hack for Earth 2021 was a global online hackathon at the world exhibition Expo2020 in Dubai, in collaboration with the United Nations (UN) and Sweden. Through this event, young people aspire to create new digital solutions to solve the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 1,371 teams from 121 countries competed under 7 different categories: Education, Environment, Human Rights, Sustainable Society, Health, Water, and Partnership.

Luminous Teen from Bangladesh was the winner under the 'Partnership' category and the founder, Md Jahirul Islam, was invited to the Hack for Earth Award Ceremony where pitched the solution to the head jury group, competing for the Hack for Earth Award.

Alongside Jahirul, Team Luminous Teen consists of Md Talha Jobaer, from BAF Shaheen College and Md Adib Raian and Sorder Rakib Hassan, from Notre Dame College.

"Luminous Teen intends to support employment opportunities for teenagers. We want to ensure a certain degree of financial independence for every teenager, and help them utilise early-age employability by converting their skills to money," Jahirul shared.

"Our policy, with proper consideration of the socio-economic barriers and public psychology, will follow a step-by-step approach. With necessary resources and partnerships, this will result in a fruitful transition of child labourers to kids enjoying the right of education, school enrichment, and financial flexibility," he explained. Luminous Teen primarily focuses on achieving SDG 8 and SDG 17.

The team has carefully studied feasibility while developing their model as they want to make this a global movement. In order to ensure proper implementation, the idea has to be backed up by a huge workforce, meaningful partnerships, resources and enthusiastic support from local governments. Moreover, proper safeguarding, personalised support for teenagers, cooperation of the target audience, infrastructure support and positive mass psychology towards change can help fight any potential threat yet to be addressed.

Luminous Teen will be working with local experts to derive an appropriate version of their model to be implemented in many other countries. "We dream of a Bangladesh where kids will be learning, earning and growing, with all their rights preserved and all their skills given the opportunity to flourish," Jahirul concluded.

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YOUNG ACHIEVER

# RUET graduate wins engineering competition with 'one-member' team

AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

Jesika Zaman is the champion of GPH Ispat-Prothom Alo En Genius Competition, which focuses on structural designs. 223 teams participated in the selection period of the event, from Bangladesh.

The judges for the event included 24 renowned professors of civil engineering departments from different renowned universities, and professional engineers of the country.

Jesika held a fascination for engineering from a young age. She completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Rajshahi University of Engineering & Technology (RUET) in 2017.

In 2018, she joined a structural consultancy firm, Design Solutions, as a junior consultant. "After graduation, I turned my passion towards structural designing into my job, and I enjoy my work very much," says Jesika.

She is currently a full-time junior engineer at the Mass Rapid Transit Line-1 project (MRT Line-1), and part-time structural engineer at Design Solutions.

The En Genius Competition came as a golden opportunity for Jesika to learn about structural engineering.

"To register in the competition you need a team of three: a graduate and a couple of third or fourth-year engineering students from your university," she adds.

**"I had to study hard to keep up with the competition but I knew I had to see this to the end."**

"However, my juniors at RUET were busy with their semester final examinations at that time, and I couldn't find members to build my team. I sought advice from the coordinator of the competition, and formed my one-member team, The Conqueror."

Balancing her job and the competition tasks were not easy for Jesika. "I had to study hard to keep up with the competition but I knew I had to see this to the end," she says.

Of the 223 teams that applied for the competition, 36 made it to the second round. Only 10 teams reached the third round.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the competition experienced a pause in 2020. Along this long journey, Jesika really enjoyed the two-day workshops, conducted by some of the greatest engineers of Bangladesh.

"This championship strengthened my confidence. I aspire to acquire higher studies in structural engineering," she concludes.

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Jesika Zaman

PHOTO: ABDUL ELA/COURTESY OF JESIKA ZAMAN



Team members and volunteers of BRIDGE Foundation

YOUTH IN ACTION

## Guiding the differently-abled

FARAH KABIR

BRIDGE Foundation works for the skill development of people with disabilities. The Co-founder, Swarna Moye Sarker, is one of the 22 Bangladeshi changemakers who have been selected for the Acumen Fellowship in 2021. She has completed her bachelor's and master's from Dhaka City College.

BRIDGE Foundation started out in 2013 with Swarna and her fellow Co-founder Natasha Israt Kabir working on a US State Department funded project, 'IT for differently-abled children'. It helped them discover that their hearing-impaired participants were gifted in the field of painting. Subsequently, they set up a Facebook page called, "Magical Art Of Silence", through which some participants' paintings, pottery, and bamboo artworks are sold to customers

around the world.

Around 80 participants attended classes on IT, cooking, and art, among other topics, which helped them get jobs in restaurants, departmental stores, schools, IT firms, and as freelance artists. The foundation has received many national and international accolades for its efforts.

"Our goal is to financially uplift people with disabilities as independent individuals who can contribute to the economy of Bangladesh," says Swarna.

The foundation plans to launch its skilled participants as trainers for the differently-abled, and work on their mental health.

Mohammad Matiuur Rahman Tuhin, an alum of New Model Degree College, volunteers at the foundation.

"It is a matter of fortune to work for people who are deprived in our society. I also learn a lot from them," he adds.

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PHOTOS: COURTESY OF BRIDGE FOUNDATION