

Beyond the boundaries of cricket

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Although practised as a fighting form, fencing is different from other forms of fighting or martial arts. "Fencing is a quiet sport, and it requires a lot of concentration. We have to share the practice grounds with players of other sports, which makes me a little uncomfortable," she attests. "Our current president of the Bangladesh Fencing Association is trying his level best to maximise our resources and minimise our struggles and I hope soon we will have better facilities."

Fatima sees a bright future for Bangladeshi fencers. She strongly encourages young individuals, especially the ones who look to pursue a career in defence, to join this game.

The young athlete, who is currently preparing for the Islamic Solidarity Games and Asian Games at the national camp, wishes for more structural support from sports institutions. "I hope that



Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protishtan (BKSP) opens its doors towards us fencers. The more promising players we train, the more honour we bring to our country."

"Volleyball is an amazing game that requires minimal resources" - Horshit Biswas, Captain, Bangladesh National Volleyball Team

Bangladesh national volleyball team captain Horshit Biswas decided to build himself as a sports person, when he was still in school in 2016.

While speaking about the merits of volleyball, Horshit talks about how it can be practised with limited resources. "It is an amazing game which does not require much space and equipment," he says.

Horshit Biswas believes that since volleyball requires minimal resources, it has great potential in Bangladesh.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

Diya Siddique wants to pursue archery and higher education at the same time.

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"Only a ball and a net - and you're good to go!"

Horshit also emphasises on the fact that volleyball takes less toil on the body, compared to many other sports.

"Now, we have higher remunerations and are gaining more ground internationally, which I find very inspiring as a player myself," he says.

"We find the rural areas of Bangladesh to be more appreciative of our efforts," mentions Horshit, who is currently preparing for a friendly match, which will be held in the Maldives. "The stadiums are mostly full, and the crowd there is very inspiring. More exposure to the media would also expose our efforts among the city dwellers and this would attract more heads towards this sport - be it fans, players, the authorities, or sponsors."

"A little appreciation goes a long way for sportspersons. We are reaching a new level - slowly but surely. We have the talent, but now, we need your support."

"I tend to embrace constructive criticism, while avoiding negative energy" - Diya Siddique, Archer

Diya Siddique was scouted by her Physical Education teacher, Md Khairul Islam, in Nilphamari Government High School. With support from her father and her teacher, she made it to a national camp talent hunt, where she was finally spotted by the authorities to play at the national level.

"Archery, being a new sport to us at that time, attracted me deeply," she shares. "I wanted to pursue academics and archery simultaneously, and getting to BKSP was a dream come true for me."

Throughout her career, Diya has always been strongly supported by her coaches, family members, and peers. The best thing about being in archery, according to her, is how dedicated her academy and teachers are towards their students. "Any player, no matter how their performance is, is always treated equally and given equal attention and resources here," she attests. "They have never fallen prey to any gender bias either and that seems to be a positive change."

Criticism is inevitable when one seeks perfection and Diya has her own way of dealing with disapproval. "I tend to embrace constructive criticism, while avoiding negative energy. I can tell when someone is giving me advice for my own

betterment," she shares. "However, an athlete should avoid negativity and envy at all costs."

Diya wishes to keep living her dream of pursuing higher education and being an archer. "I wanted to become a doctor, but as that's not possible anymore, I want to study English while I represent my country in archery," she says.

"Nothing compares to representing your country" - Mahadi Hasan Alve, Tennis Player

Young tennis player Mahadi Hasan Alve developed a keen interest in ground tennis through his visits to the Bangladesh Tennis Federation with his father, who is an employee at the organisation.

Young Alve, who is currently waiting for his SSC exams, managed to grab the attention of the selection committee for the national level, which transformed his life forever.

"I had the privilege of representing my country internationally six times, and I assure you that nothing compares to that," shares an excited Alve.

Alve also talks about how being a sportsperson helps him get through during days that he lacks self-esteem. "We all are aware how sports keep us fit, but I must say how tennis also helps me keep calm and rejuvenates my mental strength during bad days," he says. "It also helps me boost up my confidence to win against my failures, and strive for betterment with new energy."

Alve loves every aspect of tennis, and hopes to keep playing as long as his health permits. He is currently preparing for his match in Sri Lanka with the under-16 national team.

"I aspire to become as poised and resilient as Rafael Nadal," he says.

While sports offers a wide platform for each of these rising stars to display their talents, it also serves as an excellent opportunity for them to gain fame and reputation for our country. The brilliance that these young athletes are showing, despite their challenges and struggles, is unparalleled. Their achievements only echo one message, "Bangladesh exists in sports beyond the boundaries of cricket."

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The brilliance that these young athletes are showing, despite their challenges and struggles, is unparalleled.

Mahadi Hasan Alve dreams of becoming as poised as his favourite player, Rafael Nadal.

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