

# Bangladeshi youth to attend WORLD POWERLIFTING CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

**“Powerlifting changed my life significantly,” shared the young athlete. “You need to be extremely disciplined to maintain your physique and strength. This discipline has made me a better person by improving my health, focus and academics.”**

Raiyan Rahman, an 18-year-old youth studying at Mangrove school is set to compete in the World Powerlifting Championship 2022, in the sub-junior category (59kg weight limit) this August. This will be the first time someone from Bangladesh will represent the country in the international stage of powerlifting.

Powerlifting is a new sport in Bangladesh, introduced back in 2018. It's a strength-based sport consisting of three lifts namely: Squats, bench presses, and deadlifts.

The young powerlifter first joined a gym named MaxBurn back in 2019 with the intent to lose weight. “I used to be fat back in eighth grade and wasn't actually bothered by it until a friend expressed otherwise,” said Raiyan. “I was depressed and started to feel ashamed by my own body. The feeling of hating myself is what motivated me to change.”

However, during his earlier gym days, he gained more weight instead of losing it. “I fell victim to a lot of misinformation and misguidance,” noted the athlete.

“Most of the Bangladeshi gyms only have experienced trainers, instead of educated trainers,” said Raiyan. “They usually train you to achieve a bulked physique, making trainees



From the left Raiyan Rahman alongside his coach Tawsif Ali

overeat for muscle growth. Following this, I suffered from mild Bulimia, which is an eating disorder where patients' intake large amounts of calories unhealthily.”

After the COVID-19 lockdown began in 2019, the gyms closed and Raiyan was left to exercise on his own.

“During the lockdown, I resorted to doing a lot of cardio exercises including running and skipping to burn off my excess weight,” said Raiyan. “By the end of the lockdown, my body transformed, becoming leaner by losing all the excess weight and developing my muscles in the process.”

“By the time I rejoined the gym, I was already forming six-pack abs which got me really excited,” added the athlete, noting, “As I had now figured out how to develop the rest of my body, I just started training by myself.”

By 2020, after a year of self-training, Raiyan's figure underwent a massive transformation. “I developed a lean build with bigger shoulders,

biceps, triceps, and stronger legs. Furthermore, I discovered that I was much stronger than other boys my age.”

Where many regular gym members were only deadlifting around 80-90 kgs, Raiyan was lifting 190kgs, which was elevated to 200kgs under the tutelage of his coach Tawsif Ali.

“I met Raiyan at MaxBurn in 2020 and saw a lot of potential in him as a powerlifter,” said Tawsif Ali, a coach and veteran powerlifting athlete. “He used to seek advice from us now and then. Seeing his efforts and immense discipline, I suggested that he participate in the National Powerlifting Championships 2021.”

That was Raiyan's first powerlifting debut where he took the runner-up position, competing against participants much older than himself in the 59 kg weight category. Later he also joined a local tournament named “Metal War” playing against the best powerlifters in Bangladesh, where he eventually went on to bag second place.

“Tawsif Ali became my coach since the when I

started preparing for the National Powerlifting Championship, and he has been guiding me for the upcoming World Powerlifting Championships,” said Raiyan.

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“Raiyan will compete against 13-15 athletes—mostly from USA, UK, Mexico, South Africa, and so on—at the World Powerlifting championship,” shared Mominul Hoque, Founder and Secretary General of Bangladesh Powerlifting Association (BPA). “Being realistic about reaching the top five will be a hard task, but I want to see him achieve it.”

“I have not thought much about the future. My parents and coach have supported me till this point and right now I just want to do my best and properly represent Bangladesh, and earn the country a medal,” concluded Raiyan Rahman.

## DLA Piper Global Scholarship paves the way for young Bangladeshi scholars

ZAREEN NAWAR

**A total of 5 Bangladeshi law students have been recipients of this prestigious scholarship since 2019, two of whom received the award this year. The Daily Star reached out to the recipients to learn more.**

DLA Piper is a global law firm with lawyers bestrewed throughout 40 countries across the globe, with the goal of catering to the legal needs of their clients all over the world. The DLA Piper Global Scholarships Program (GSP) is a two-year programme, in collaboration with the University of Oxford, for undergraduate law students between the second and last year, as well as for postgraduate law students willing to pursue a two-year postgraduate qualification in their related field.

The crucial criteria in the selection of the scholarship recipients however are the mandate of the students studying in their home country and belonging to one of the countries listed on their website.

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Tasnim, a 4th-year law student of Dhaka University, became one of the recipients of the prestigious DLA Piper Global Scholarship in 2022. Years of academic excellence throughout her school life, followed by her achieving second positions in both the B and D unit admission tests of the University of Dhaka in 2017 gave her the scope to pursue Law—based on her score under B unit in particular.

Her academic journey has



Tasnim



Mehedi Hasan Turin

since been nothing short of meritorious. Tasnim even received a variety of other scholarships, notably the ‘Shamaila Rahman Memorial Scholarship’ for being one of the top two female students on the merit list. After preliminary selections for the DLA Piper Global Scholarship Programme (GSP), she sat for a one-on-one interview with Vincent Seah, a partner of DLA Piper Singapore. During the interview, Tasnim extensively discussed her desire to one day start become a Judge in the lower judiciary of Bangladesh, which she aims to achieve with the knowledge

and guidance of DLA Piper GSP. 4th-year student of North South University, Mehedhi Hasan Turin is the second DLA Piper GSP recipient of 2022. He was born and raised in Kishoreganj, and completed his education there until it was time for him to get admission to a university in Dhaka. After getting into the Department of Law at NSU, he mentioned having a hard time, as people were disappointed that he did not get into a public university. He, however, paid them no heed and pursued his dreams with determination. Mehedhi was

waiting for an opportunity to prove himself besides his studies and work in a few organisations in his locality and national arena (Youth Against Hunger, Youth Mock Parliament). So, when he received an email about the DLA Piper scholarship from the department, he prepped accordingly. He plans to obtain an LLM degree afterward and prepare himself for the Bangladesh Judicial Service and Bar Council exam to ultimately one day become a legal advisor in the corporate sector.

Aside from the new recipients, the endeavours of the recipients from previous years can provide a glimpse into the possibilities available to scholars of DLA Piper GSP.

Md Fahmedul Islam Dewan, a previous recipient of the award from 2020, is currently in London, doing a leadership course at Said Business School, University of Oxford. Afterwards, he is in queue to do an internship at the DLA Piper Headquarters. Fahmedul also serves as the General Secretary of North South University Law and Mooting Society (NSULMS). The young lawyer has now been able to take another step towards fulfilling his dream of becoming the ‘voice of voiceless’.

The expenses for scholars like Tasnim and Fahmedul, including their university tuition, travel, accommodation, medical, and other miscellaneous costs are the responsibility of DLA Piper GSP, thereby taking various burdens off the shoulders of the students.

The scholars are also flown across the world to attend fellowships, internships, mentoring, and development programmes. One of the two first Bangladeshi scholars is Sabiha Mezbabin Oishee, a DLA Piper GSP recipient from 2019. She had the opportunity to start her own legal and humanitarian forum “Bangladesh Forum for Legal and Humanitarian Affairs” with the motivation to make the youth aware of their social and legal rights, as well as their responsibilities towards the country.

Additionally, Sabiha also works as a Research Assistant at the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance, at NSU. As for her interests in humanitarian law, she works with International Labour Organisation, regarding ‘Labour Diplomacy’ under the institute. She is thankful to the DLA Piper GSP for playing a crucial part in her success story.

Kalyan Chakraborty, the second DLA Piper GSP recipient from 2019, pursued a fully funded OELP from the University of Oxford and a post-graduation diploma in Genocide Studies from the University of Dhaka after his LLM in International Commercial Law from NSU. This year he is working as a coordinator of the DLA Piper GSP. He also writes for the reputed national dailies as a columnist. Moreover, he is an honorary advisor of some organizations that work on humanitarian grounds. Due to the DLA Piper GSP, he rose to the top in this challenging field.