



PHOTOS: JIM'S STUDIO

Paving the way for INCLUSIVITY

Deshi Ballers welcomes women with diverse gender identities in sports

“Activities like basketball or cricket remained beyond my reach. Now, at the age of 25, I have a platform that empowers my community’s voice.”



SHANUM SARKAR

On July 22, Deshi Ballers, a female-led sports development group working to create a platform for women, launched “Sports Without Labels” in

everyone can showcase their skills and passion for the game.

Deshi Ballers Co-Founder, Ashreen Mridha, illustrates how the motivations behind this initiative began.

“This project comes from a very personal place. My mother would accompany me to and from school back in my school days. There, we frequently encountered a transgender woman struggling to make ends meet on the streets. Despite being perfectly capable, she was denied employment opportunities due to prejudice. I have a younger brother who needed a caregiver back then, and my mother employed her to look after us.”

Ashreen describes this person as a mother figure. However, despite her extensive involvement in sports, Ashreen never witnessed transgender representation within the field. Instead, they were often relegated to the fringes of society, facing discrimination and relying on begging for survival.

Manisha Meem Nipun, a transgender woman and a founding member at Pathchola Bangladesh, an organisation dedicated to improving the lives of the transgender community, resonates deeply with Ashreen’s insights and recalls her own experiences.

At the age of six, her inclination towards feminine traits led to her exclusion from playing with boys. Her peers from primary school marginalised her by withholding participation in sports like cricket and resorting to derogatory language.

“Activities like basketball or cricket remained beyond my reach. Now, at the age of 25, I have a platform that empowers my community’s

voice. After enduring 25 years of prejudice, I finally have the chance to make meaningful contributions and find ways to give the upcoming generation the potential to seize the opportunities that were denied to us,” Manisha adds.

In the absence of platforms that embrace deserving communities, Deshi Ballers recognised the need for action.

“Our platform may be small, but it serves as a stepping stone. We start by opening our doors for basketball but plan to expand on health and fitness too. We aspire to create a safe space that fosters inclusivity. This initiative represents a significant

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shift in Bangladesh, and I hope this collaboration serves as a driving force for more organisations to step forward,” adds Ashreen.

Both Ashreen and Manisha emphasise that this initiative is driven by action. Beyond mere events and photographs, they look forward to meaningful engagement, and for people of diverse gender identities to reach out to them and finally find the safe space they’ve been deprived of.

In a world fragmented by labels and titles, Ashreen concludes by expressing hope for a future in which gender labels no longer limit their playgrounds.

Albums that feel like a goodbye

NADERA NAEEMA OHI

Whether you are graduating, losing a loved one, or leaving behind an old dream, there is always something for you to bid farewell to. From the mellowest to the most uplifting, here are some of the albums that you should listen to for processing the most bittersweet and complex of emotions – bidding goodbye.

Carrie & Lowell

Soft strings and piano notes guide us gently into one of Sufjan Stevens’ most beautiful and heart-wrenching records. Released in 2015 as a reflection of the complicated grief he felt for the death of his mother, *Carrie & Lowell* speaks at once lovingly and sorrowfully to feelings of irreversible loss that we can’t always avoid.

Melodrama

Lorde began writing her second album, *Melodrama* at age 17. Released in 2017, its lush electropop and wistful lyricism together paint a vibrant, cinematic world that memorialises both the feeling of being terribly young and realising you can never keep that time with you forever. If your heart feels too big for your chest, close your eyes and listen to *Melodrama* in the dark.

Circles

Circles is Mac Miller’s final album, released posthumously in 2020. In times of turbulent self-growth and loss, Miller’s words feel intimate enough to be your own, and gentle enough to be a safe embrace. The soft, lowkey R&B production by Jon Brion – Miller’s mentor during his darkest times – encourages the kind of quiet optimism in waking up this morning, and the next after it.



DESIGN: FAISAL BIN IQBAL

folklore

If you’ve had to let go of someone you love, there’s likely already a place in your heart for Taylor Swift’s indie-folk inspired 2020 album. If not, it’s fully worth a breakup just to appreciate the gorgeous, yearning and unforgettable stories Swift weaves through the subtly poetic lyrics of *folklore*.

Random Access Memories

In a different vein from the others in this list, Daft Punk’s final album, released in 2013, is their goodbye to fans of two decades. Encapsulating the very best of the electronic genre that Daft Punk was instrumental in developing, the classics in *Random Access Memories* are no less than a perfect ending; ones to turn up high when you’re welcoming new beginnings of your own.

Viva Las Vengeance

“Shut up and go to bed... Viva Las Vengeance!” are the triumphant words that carry out Brendon Urie on the shoulders of certain stardom for years to come. From emo history to extravagant pop-rock perfection, this is the Panic! At the Disco record you put on when the past’s behind you and your incredible future’s to come.

Trítico Jatra

Endings are bittersweet and difficult, and often, the only person you have to rely on through such times is yourself. Nemesi’s “Shesh Gaan” is the melancholy acoustic contemplation of an uncertain future while “Kobe” is the song you listen to when decide to push forward to that future, despite everything.

At this time, Ohi may be found crying in her room to Frank Ocean. Cry with her at fb.com/nadera.naeema

LEARNING ENGLISH

A guide that doesn’t involve books

ARANYO RISHI CHOWDHURY

People have almost always believed that reading books is the ideal way one can learn or improve their English. However, forming a reading habit can prove to be difficult at times. Getting through ten pages of a book can feel like a grueling task. However, learning can be a lot more effective if you enjoy the process. So, here’s a breakdown of a few other ways you can boost your English skills.

Movies and TV Shows

Visual media like movies and TV series could serve as a better alternative to reading books as they require less effort to consume. Watching such forms of media is a good way to understand how to use certain expressions, expand vocabulary, and learn proper pronunciation in English.

However, it’s worth noting that dialects, speech patterns, and expressions can vary across genres and time periods that these movies and shows are set in. Pronunciations also vary to some extent, especially between American and British shows. Therefore, if you’re learning English by consuming visual media, be aware of these details.

Podcasts

Podcasts are a great way to intuitively learn

how to speak English. You can multitask while keeping one on since they don’t require that much attention to understand. They also offer a varied range of content. Serialised stories with intricate dialogues can teach you how to recognise good writing, while casual conversations between people on the most random topics can demonstrate how English is spoken in informal settings.

Comic Books

A lot of the time, we need something a bit more immersive for it to have any real effect. Something requiring more direct engagement could be more effective, and for those who have a hard time visualising written stories, comic books are perfect.

While not all comic books are created equal, if you know where to look, you’ll find strikingly well-written stories and characters. Since the medium relies so much on dialogue and artistic depiction, you’ll be able to grasp the exact emotions certain words, sentences or expressions evoke in characters.

Video Games

While video games are the most engaging item on the list, you’ll have to be especially careful about what video games you’re playing when it comes to figuring out

the language. Video games that feature a lot of story elements are the best option since they’re focused on dealing with communication between characters. The sense of involvement we feel in a game’s story can captivate us more than other mediums can. Additionally, video games usually feature more colloquial speech, which is much better for learning to speak in a casual manner.

Rishi’s chronic procrastination is ruining his life. Send him more things to procrastinate with at reeshe46321@gmail.com



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