

Words of wisdom for ASPIRING BOXERS

In conversation with National champion and professional boxer Sura Krishna Chakma



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA

For anyone who dreams of representing our country on the international stage, my message is simple: there is no substitute for hard work. Hard work and discipline are the two pillars of boxing. Without them, nothing is possible. Luck doesn't exist in this sport, but if you put in the work, stay dedicated, and train under the right coach, everything else will follow.

ORCHID CHAKMA

Sura Krishna Chakma's journey began in 2006, when a boxing trial at the Rangamati Mari Stadium gave him the opportunity to enrol at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan (BKSP). He then competed for the first time the following year, at the 2007 Intermediate Boxing Championship, where he won a silver medal.

From there, Sura Krishna went on to compete in several tournaments held on national occasions, including Victory Day and Independence Day boxing events, taking home gold medals along the way. A major milestone came in 2013, when he won gold in the senior category at the Bangladesh Games, which earned him a place in the national team that same year. In 2014, he travelled to Glasgow, Scotland, to compete in the Commonwealth Games – his first opportunity to represent Bangladesh on an international stage.

Campus sat down with Sura Krishna to learn a bit more about his journey and what he has to say to aspiring boxers in Bangladesh.

Campus (C): Can you tell us a little about your accomplishments in your boxing career so far?

Sura Krishna (S): On the domestic front, I have been the unbeaten national amateur champion since 2013. Every time I have competed nationally, I have won. On the professional side, my story begins earlier than most people realise. While professional boxing only came to Bangladesh in 2022, I had already turned professional in 2018, competing in India. That makes me the first professional boxer from Bangladesh, according to BoxRec. I have fought ten professional bouts to date, winning eight.

Among those fights, the standout achievement is winning the Asian Boxing Federation (ABF) – the Asian belt – title in 2023. I also earned a bronze medal at the 2019 South Asian Games in Nepal.

C: Why do you think people are drawn to boxing?

S: Boxing isn't for everyone, but many people are naturally inclined toward it, and enjoy watching it even more. You can see this beyond just sports: action films are hugely popular in Bangladesh, and people from all walks of life watch and enjoy them. That same appetite for watching people compete physically is what I think draws people to boxing

and combat sports, in general, even in a country where a strong culture around these sports hasn't fully taken shape yet.

C: You continued boxing alongside your studies. What would your advice be to aspiring boxers who, currently, are students themselves?

S: I studied at BKSP, where boxing and academics went hand in hand from the start. That balance was built into my life early on. For university students hoping to pursue boxing alongside their

capable of going.

C: For an aspiring Bangladeshi boxer, could you walk us through the local boxing scene?

S: The facilities available to aspiring boxers today are significantly better than they used to be. In the past, trained coaches were found almost exclusively at BKSP. But with professional boxing taking root in Bangladesh, qualified trainers are now available outside of BKSP as well.

Many BKSP graduates are even launching their own coaching careers, partly to improve their own

without understanding the science behind it is not just ineffective; it can be actively harmful. Without that foundational knowledge, you risk overtraining your athletes, causing fatigue, and leading to injuries that could seriously set them back.

C: You also run a boxing academy in Rangamati. Could you tell us a bit about that?

S: The academy's journey began after Covid, when I noticed a growing interest in boxing among people in the community. Many see boxing as nothing more than fighting, but I wanted to show those drawn to the sport what it truly involves. So, I simply started training anyone who came to me with a genuine interest, building them up from the ground up.

It started with a small group in Rangamati. Without a gym, we made do with whatever space we could find, like open fields and the Rangamati Mari Stadium, and when I went on my morning runs, I brought them along. Training happened wherever we could make it happen.

But as more people expressed interest, it became clear that outdoor sessions weren't enough. We needed a proper space with real facilities to train seriously. By then, my group had grown to eight to ten people, and I could see the potential – these players could go on to do something great. That belief is what pushed me to establish the gym, which officially opened in early 2025, around March or April.

C: Do you have any words of wisdom for aspiring boxers who are looking to wave the Bangladeshi flag in the international scene?

S: For anyone who dreams of representing our country on the international stage, my message is simple: there is no substitute for hard work. Hard work and discipline are the two pillars of boxing. Without them, nothing is possible. Luck doesn't exist in this sport, but if you put in the work, stay dedicated, and train under the right coach, everything else will follow.

The first step, though, is building the right mindset. You have to dare to dream big, whether that's becoming a world champion or standing on the Olympic podium. If you can't picture yourself reaching those heights, you won't get there. In my view, it all starts from within: build your mindset, build your determination, and success will take care of itself.



Sura Krishna founded a boxing academy to give back, using the sport to teach the youth life skills that go far beyond the ring.

studies, it's likely to be a tougher road, simply because most won't have come into it with prior experience in the sport.

For those who want to start young, two things are essential: determination and a good coach. If your goal is to pursue boxing seriously while keeping up with your education, I strongly recommend beginning under a coach who can guide you through the fundamentals properly. Master the basics first, and from there, you'll gradually begin to understand just how far you're

livelihoods, and this growth has opened up new income streams across the sector.

That said, limitations remain. If we want to compete seriously at the international level, we need to adopt the methods that the rest of the world is using. We have coaches, but they need to become more skilled. Even our amateur coaches, capable as they are, need to keep developing, because great players aren't built on good intentions alone.

Pulling a training routine off the internet

Stepping into the ring: What it takes to get started with amateur boxing

MD. NAYEEM HAIDER

TW: Mentions of self-harm and addiction.

Boxers display unfathomable determination in disciplining their bodies and minds, pushing themselves beyond their limits. They are undoubtedly athletes who deserve greater support and recognition. These individuals typically start their journeys early in life and compete at the amateur level before transitioning to the professional ranks. But where do they find the spark to step into the ring?

For most young people, the fascination with combat sports begins in front of a screen, watching action movies or playing video games. The same was the case for Sameer Imran Chowdhury, a BBA student at North South University who began training to compete at the amateur level in 2023. However, his parents were reluctant to let him participate in combat sports due to his poor fitness as well as the plethora of health conditions he suffered in his childhood.

"It all changed after Covid, when the diseases I had finally went away," says Sameer, describing the beginning of the journey. A journey that, to him, has been miraculous and forged through sheer grit.

He continues, "I began to take fitness very seriously from then, and I joined the gym soon after completing my A levels. But weight lifting gradually started to feel too monotonous for me. I wanted to pursue something that would let me utilise all of my physicality – my strength, endurance, speed, and agility. I asked myself then: now that I can do all the things that I couldn't before, why not try boxing?"

For Adib Alam Aridro, an A level student and boxer affiliated with Xcel Sports Management and Promotions, it was watching boxing matches and then sparring with a boxer that made him fall in love with the sport. He describes his experience, "I used to practise karate, and

the Bangladesh Boxing Federation was not far from that place. This one time, a boxing tournament was going on, and I went to spectate to see what it was all about. I instantly loved it, and I felt that the sport was for me. After that, I started training. When I first sparred, though, I was beaten badly. Being punched was painful, but I put up a fight. I enjoyed the physical exertion, and I felt the sport was for me, that I could become a good fighter."



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

But the journey to becoming a good boxer has always been an arduous one. To prepare for such a strenuous sport and excel at it, aspiring amateur boxers must endure a rigorous training regimen.

Fahim Zaman, who has been a freelance boxing coach for over 15 years, gives his insight: "Once someone makes up their mind to be a boxer, they need to take the training lifestyle seriously. They need to show up every day; they need to perform their exercise routine diligently, which

involves doing bag work, pad sessions, ab workouts, and sparring."

"Bag work" involves trainees training with a punching bag, and "pad sessions" or "pad work" involve them practising specific punches with the coach. Zaman also stresses the importance of diet discipline and puts emphasis on weight training and running to build strength and stamina.

"When they start out, we teach them the six basic boxing punches – the jab, the

lead hook, the rear hook, the lead uppercut, and the rear uppercut," says Muntaha-Ul-Haque Mumit, a professional boxer and kickboxer who works as a boxing coach for Legacy MMA Gym.

He continues, "We also have them work on their footwork. All of these make the foundations of any boxer, and our training programme is designed to strongly instil these basics in them."

Mumit also describes at length what an ordinary training session may look like. Mumit tells his story, "I lost interest in everything after my mother died. I quit boxing, disengaged from the other sports I was involved in, and couldn't even bring myself to study properly. I contemplated taking my own life and gravitated towards self-destructive tendencies. One day, my father told me that I had to be strong, that I had to live on for the sake of my mother's dream. He told me to balance boxing and my studies at the same time. So, I returned to boxing and trained harder than ever before. I thought about quitting over and

"We first have them start with four rounds of skipping. Then they do some shadow boxing – the first two rounds without weights and the next two involve one-kilogram dumbbells. This is followed by four rounds of bag work and then pad work or partner drills, where they practise their punches with the partners we pair them up with. Once a week, we hold sparring sessions."

"When we notice that a fighter has potential, that they are doing well in sparring sessions, that is when we deem them ready to compete," adds Zaman.

Yet, despite all the training in the world, it is only the fight itself that can truly forge a fighter.

Mahathier Mohammad, an LLB student at London College of Legal Studies (South) and an amateur boxer, shares experiences from his first official fight. "I was very afraid and nervous; for the first few minutes, I was frozen and shaking. I couldn't land my punches properly, but eventually I gained the confidence and started showing what I had learned. I won that fight by a unanimous decision."

But for Mahathier, the story of his first fight and victory will always carry with it the bittersweet tint of him rediscovering himself following his mother's passing. Indeed, for many amateur boxers, the real fight exists outside the ring, and boxing itself is the staunch ally that helps them prevail.

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over again, but I moved forward regardless. Then, of course, came my first victory. It was an emotional, cathartic moment for me."

"Contrary to popular belief, combat sports like boxing do not make people violent. Rather, it provides an outlet for repressed emotions and helps them control that side of themselves," says Mumit.

The others who were spoken to corroborated these views, highlighting how learning boxing and competing at the amateur level have made them calmer and humbler. Aridro discusses how the sport can help in dealing with severe issues such as addiction: "When you love the game, you want to get better at it more than anything else. If you have any addictions, that will certainly cause problems with your training. That in itself will make you want to forego such things."

Yet, when talking about the amateur boxing scene, there appears to be a sense of pessimism in those engaged with the sport. While the professional boxing scene has seen remarkable development in the past few years, amateur boxing has remained stagnant, or perhaps even regressed.

"The target of amateur boxers should be to get into professional boxing. Only then can they do well. But if their end goal is to pursue national titles at the amateur level, I don't think they'll be able to go far," Mumit cautions.

The young people whom I spoke to all wished to have boxing as part of their futures. Mahathier is of the belief that he can build a career in the legal profession and also continue the sport. Aridro wishes to become a promoter of boxing and help the sport grow and thrive. Sameer plans to continue pursuing boxing alongside his job or business. He says, "I know very well that it's going to be hard. If I fail, that's alright. But why not go all out before that?"

Nayem is a student of law and a contributing writer for The Daily Star.