

Uddipta Bangladesher Obhijatri: Stories of people who dared to do

A number of brilliant individuals are taking Bangladesh's name to a unique height with their contributions in different fields for the welfare of Bangladeshi people or are overall an inspiring example to Bangladesh and highly recognised in the international arena. In order to celebrate the achievements and honours of these torch bearers, Shah Cement and The Daily Star collaborated in a campaign called 'Uddipta Bangladesher Obhijatri' or Adventurers of Illuminated Bangladesh — a series of nine episodes focusing on inspiring people who dared to do and make Bangladesh proud in the process.

Dr Firdausi Qadri

Born in a middle-class family, Dr Firdausi Qadri always knew that education and self-reliance is imperative.

"Your friends and family can support you, but I think it is important for an individual to find their own solutions for their own problems," said this inspiring icon who is presently one of the top 100 scientists in Asia.

In 2021, she was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award. Presently working as the head of mucosal immunity and vaccinology of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), Dr Firdausi Qadri tells us about being able to represent Bangladesh on the international dimension and shares some insightful suggestions for the future scientists in the first episode.

Team OxyJet

Consisting of teachers and students of BUET, team OxyJet invented a CPAP machine by the name of OxyJet for COVID patients which is not only effective but also affordable.

Team OxyJet earned the championship at the Bangabandhu Innovation Grand Final. Dr Taufiq Hasan, associate professor at the Department of Biomedical Engineering, BUET and leader of Team OxyJet, tells us how the project was an iterative process, how countless meetings with doctors made them realise what we lacked in Bangladesh when it came to COVID treatment and how they decided to make a CPAP, which works without electricity.

"Only the perils of COVID-19 were our motivation. When we see this device being used and actually saving lives, that feeling cannot be put into words," he said.

Senjuti Saha

The first Bangladeshi to become a board member of World Health Organisation's

polio eradication initiative, Senjuti Saha is one of the leading microbiologists in Bangladesh who was awarded Bill and Melinda Gates award.

"I wanted to be a detective like Tin Goyenda but in microbiology," she says with an assuring smile as she tells

the story of how her desire to work alongside her father pushed her to the glorious path that she is on today.

Presently, a molecular genetics researcher at the Child Health Research Foundation, Senjuti

Saha discusses her career, working with her father and the necessity of translating raw data for policy



makers. In this third episode, she appears as a shining example of people who can and will take Bangladesh to the zenith of success if they receive enough support through the right channels.

Maria Manda

In this episode, Maria Manda — a jubilant sports star, tells us the story of how a young girl who could not even kick a ball became the Captain of Bangladesh Under 19 Women's Football Team.

Maria comes from a small village called Dabayara in Mymensingh.

"I couldn't play in the rainy season because everywhere was flooded. Finding a boat was difficult and I didn't even have a pair of boots for practice," she speaks about the challenges she had to face to become the Captain of SAAF Under 19 Champion Team. In this inspiring episode, join Maria Manda in her journey to becoming a world class sportsperson and a key player for Bangladesh.

Team Buet HellBent

HellBent, a team from BUET has earned the title of the 'Champion of the Asia West' in the International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC) Moscow World Final 2021. The three members of HellBent — H M Ashiqul Islam, Arghya Pratim Pal, and Pritom Kundu were coached by Professor Mohammad Sohel Rahman who tells us the story of this achievement and the culture in BUET that facilitates such success.

While COVID was a curse for most people, team HellBent used this difficult time to their advantage. Bangladesh will host the 45th ICPC. Team HellBent hopes to represent Bangladesh once again and hopes to secure more than the regional championship this time.

Team Mohakash

NASA Space Apps Challenge 2021 featured 4535 teams from 162 countries. Team Mohakash of Bangladesh, secured the championship in the category "Best Mission

Concept" and proved that Bangladesh is not far behind when it comes to innovation. Their invention, the "Advanced Regolith Sample System" will make it easier for astronauts to work and collect samples in exoplanets and satellites by modulating dust.

"When we started designing the tool, we stumbled upon a mechanism and it was not public knowledge how it worked. We were stuck for a while but we brainstormed and eventually cracked it and as a designer, this was our biggest achievement that we could crack a NASA mechanism from our homes in Bangladesh," said Sumit Chanda, the team leader of Team Mohakash.

Marina Tabassum

Recognised as one of the top 50 thinkers of 2020 in Prospect magazine of UK, Marina Tabassum is an architect who was also awarded the Soane Medal in the following year as a recognition of her 'architecture of relevance.' "If you really believe in your country, your work should reflect it in action which will benefit the nation," said she stating that the only future plan at the moment is to change people's lives through architecture. In the seventh instalment of this series, listen to her discussing the background and experiences of the project that earned her recognition and what she thinks about the future of architecture in the context of Bangladesh and its people.

Fairooz Faizah Beether

As the co-founder of 'Moner School', Fairouz Faizah Beether speaks to us about the inception and growth of 'Moner School' — a team that dedicated itself to solving all sorts of mental health problem and helping people by ensuring a sound mental health.

While it started only as a portal of speaking about mental health, soon they realised what the mass people needed and adapted accordingly.

Beether personifies goodwill and compassion and continues to work with 'Moner School' by spreading happiness, regular workshops and creating para counsellors through training.

