



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF NADIA SULTANA PRIYANKA

Menstrual hygiene is a necessity, not a taboo

“I stayed at my ancestral home, Lakshmpur, during most of the pandemic, and noticed many rural women still use wet cloth during their periods,” adds Nadia.

AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

Nadia Sultana Priyanka, the founder of Napref3, has always carried a passionate heart towards social work. She established Napref3 back in May, 9 2021 on International Mother's Day, to help women and girls who cannot afford sanitary pads.

“I had a passion for social work from a young age and volunteered to help the common people even before Napref3,” said Nadia.

Napref3 gifts sanitary pads to the poverty struck and rural areas of Bangladesh, hoping to raise menstrual hygiene awareness in every corner of the nation. Plans for Napref3 began between 2019-2020. Nadia was inspired to work with menstrual hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I stayed at my ancestral home, Lakshmpur, during most of the pandemic, and noticed many rural women still use wet cloth during their periods,” adds Nadia.

“Menstrual pain is a common enemy of every female. However, they were unaware of menstrual

hygiene,” said Nadia, adding that, “They do not bother to buy sanitary napkins, as it is too expensive for them. That's where the idea of Napref3 struck me.”

‘Napref3’ stands for ‘before sleep’ and ‘F3’ represents ‘free from fence’. The organisation started with a small fund from Nadia, which she had up from her pocket money over 1.5 years.

“My mother has been my pillar of support when I first began Napref3,” smiled Nadia, “Both of us go house to house back in Lakshmpur, raising awareness about menstrual hygiene and sanitary pads. We would also provide them with free sanitary pads afterward.”

Later, sixteen volunteers joined Nadia's cause to raise menstrual hygiene awareness within the female population.

“We are a bit tight on funds, as most of the funding comes from our own pockets. From my parents to our volunteers, everyone supports and contributes as much as they can to keep Napref3 afloat,” said Nadia.

Napref3 has already conducted multiple events and seminars on menstrual hygiene in Lakshmpur,



Dhaka, Chandpur, and Netrokona.

“We are also trying to help out girls and women from ethnic minorities scattered around Bangladesh,” adds Nadia.

“Recently we gifted sanitary napkins to 100 girls from Netrokona,” reports Nadia, stating that, “their appreciation for our work filled my heart with indescribable joy.”

make one school adapt this ‘period corner’ facility, Nadia aspires to ensure this facility is available in every school in the nation.

During her escapades with Napref3, Nadia and her team faced bad comments and disapproval from many across the internet, from netizens to families of their beneficiaries, many were against the work Napref3 was trying to do. However, Nadia bravely continued to work towards her goals.

“I believe the taboo surrounding the topic of menstrual hygiene only exists because many are unaware about the issue,” says menstrua hygiene activists, adding that, “Both boys and girls should learn about it, only by doing this can we break this social taboo.”

“Menstrual hygiene is a necessity for women across the nation, yet 86 percent of women in Bangladesh are unaware about the topic. We at Napref3 dream of spreading menstrual hygiene awareness to every district in Bangladesh,” concludes Nadia.

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Team Ramen represents Bangladesh in regional final

HSBC Business Case Competition

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Bringing a shift in the business case format, by going from a classroom to a global competition framework, HSBC/HKU Asia Pacific Business Case Competition strengthens the traditional qualities of a case solving competition.

The competition aims to improve students' business case solving abilities, through a global perspective, while also developing future business leaders. As a result, students' career options and employability will also be widened, bridging the gap between academics and the international business communities.

This year, Team Ramen from Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka, won the national round and got the opportunity to



They formed this team of four in 2019 to compete in the intra-rounds of the HSBC-IBA Business Case Competition. Unfortunately, the team did not qualify for the national rounds back then.

“Being able to compete in the national rounds in our final year as undergraduate students, and then going on to win it truly makes it feel like things have come full circle,” added Afnan.

Team Ramen had to go through a total of five rounds, where the first two rounds were intra-rounds, where they competed against other teams from IBA. Finally, four teams qualified for the national rounds.

A total of 50 teams from over 20 universities competed in the national rounds. In each round, the teams had four hours to solve the case provided, followed by 10 minutes for the presentation. These cases covered different topics ranging from HR solutions to blockchain technology and how businesses can develop environment-friendly solutions.

In the national finale, they competed against 3 other teams from IBA and one team from Bangladesh University of Professionals. The final case featured the global fast-fashion business sensation “SHEIN”.

“It focused on the brand's growth during the pandemic and how it could potentially be a bubble. It also had concerns regarding whether its way of operating is unsustainable and if they are maintaining proper working conditions. Lastly, the case also challenged us to look into how the brand could potentially expand their business,” explained Shadab.

Throughout the rounds, Team Ramen worked tirelessly to give their absolute best and were confident with their analysis and the solutions that they were proposing.

“We have always believed that this is one of the most important elements to succeeding, and it sets the tone for all of us,” asserted Shadab.

The international rounds came to

a conclusion on June 2, 2022. Team Ramen finished in the competition as a finalist, with the team from Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies from India finishing as second runner-up and the team from University of Toronto from Canada finishing as first runner-up. The overall champion was University of Malaya from Malaysia.

Although the basic format for the international rounds was the same, the case solving duration was increased to six hours and with the presentation time being 20 minutes. Team Ramen's first-round case focused on the Chinese company WeChat Pay and how they are helping small and medium sized enterprises thrive.

Both the national and international rounds required the teams to communicate their solutions using handwritten slides, meaning they had to illustrate and write everything on a piece of A4 paper.

“This was very new to us since we have always prepared our presentations on PowerPoint, and the trickiest part was figuring out the most effective and efficient way of crafting these handwritten slides to communicate our ideas clearly,” explained Sadman. He also noted this as one of the most fun parts of the competition for him.

“It is a matter of great honour for us to represent Bangladesh in any capacity on the international stage. We were initially supposed to go to Hong Kong but it was shifted online due to the pandemic. Regardless of the modality, this has been a moment of joy and pride for us,” concluded Azwad.

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Diving towards glory

AZIBOR RAHMAN

Md Hussain, a student of class ten at Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan (BKSP), made the first national record in a 5-metre platform diving competition in 2018, and secured the second place in a 3-metre springboard diving competition in 2017.

Last year, he won three gold medals in three events, featuring 1 and 3-metre springboard diving challenges, as well as a 5-metre platform diving challenge. Hussain is from Hatbakua, Jhenidah.

He started to learn swimming under the guidance of his coach, Sirazul Islam Pinto, in 2015. The ambitious swimmer joined BKSP the following year.

Hussain's father, Shahadat Mondol, is a farmer. Owing to his commendable achievements in swimming, Hussain does not have to pay any tuition fees at BKSP.

Moving forward, Hussain hopes to join the Navy.



PHOTO: COURTESY



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF TEAM RAMEN

represent Bangladesh in the regional finale. The team consists of Abdullah Azwad Rafeed, Afnan Faruk, Sadman Sakib Pantho and Syed Shadab Tajwar.

“The competition has been thrilling and we have learned something new each round. We have always enjoyed solving business cases and when it comes to case competitions, it does not get bigger than HSBC,” Afnan shared.