

NEWSREEL WORLD

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Programmanus av Steve Hankey

ALANNA LESLIE: Hi, I'm Alanna Leslie and welcome to Newsreel World...

Today we're off to New Zealand, Rwanda and India...

But first, Australia...

The affordability and sustainability of sanitary or period products is an issue that affects young women and girls all over the world.

In some places there is also a degree of social shame attached to periods, where women are treated as being "unclean" when they're menstruating.

In Australia, a young entrepreneur is trying to tackle these issues.

Sarah Allely reports...

Sarah Allely: There are two problems when it comes to period products.

Most menstrual products are expensive and they're also bad for the environment.

And in some countries this means women and girls don't have access to them.

So they're skipping school when they get their periods.

Melbourne student Mursal Azadzoi heard about how period poverty was affecting girls and teens on the Pacific Island of Kiribati.

Speaking to Hack on the ABC, Mursal said she decided to focus her university research on helping out.

MURSAL AZADZOI: Previously I created an idea for biodegradable packaging. That's basically the start of this idea.

Sarah Allely: Mursal has created a reusable product that uses locally available banana fibre. She's also designed packaging that breaks down when it's buried on the island.



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MURSAL AZADZOI: So we've got two elements of the pad that entirely consists of an underwear that is ruched, made from local blouse makers, and a cake that is made from banana fibre.

These are used from banana stems that are completely rejected and are not economically seen as valuable on the island.

If you shred banana stems fine enough and if you're able to mix in paper that's due for recycling, you create a thin little paper layer.

Sarah Allely: Mursal says that her business model aims to have local women leading the production lines, and eventually expand to sell to other countries.

MURSAL AZADZOI: This is not specific just for Kiribati.

Sarah Allely: Mursal lives in Australia where reusable menstrual products like period pants and cups are becoming much more available.

But two Sydney teenagers say these products need to be much more accessible and more needs to be done to make them the norm.

Porter Christ is 13 and uses mainly disposable pads so far.

PORTER CHRIST: The amount of pads you can use during your period, is like you can use a lot of them.

It's not very good for the environment because they're like made out of... you got plastic on the outside and it's just... It's a waste of plastic because there are other options but one of the main options for periods are pads and that's just encouraging the use of plastic.

SARAH ALLELY: What would need to change to make you feel more comfortable about using those?

PORTER CHRIST: I think the awareness about those. It's like you know they exist but you don't know exactly where to find all of those things? Like in stores... I don't know exactly where to go to find those types of things. I'm sure if I looked it would be easier but if there was like advertisements showing how they might be better than some of the other products then I think I'd be more willing to try those.

Sarah Allely: Charlotte Owens is also thirteen. She says sustainable products like period underwear should be more accessible.



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CHARLOTTE OWENS: Although I'm fortunate enough where I can easily access and afford them some people might not be able to afford them.

So if they were cheaper that's something I'd want to change.

Also, if menstrual cups and period undies were as common to find as pads and tampons...

Sarah Allely: This is Sarah Allely reporting from Australia for Newsreel World.

ALANNA LESLIE: Thanks Sarah.

ALANNA LESLIE: Rwandan referee Salima Mukansanga has made history in this year's Africa Cup of Nations by becoming the first woman to referee a Nations Cup game.

The Africa Cup of Nations is a football tournament that features the best international men's teams from across Africa.

Salima was one of four female officials at this year's Nations Cup, which was won by West African side Senegal for the first time in their history.

Speaking to France 24, Salima spoke of how support from her home country helped her get to where she is today:

Salima Mukansanga: "My country is among the countries respecting women. They are respecting the ability of women. They are giving opportunity and chance to the women: in sport, in whatever they feel. So my country helped me a lot."

ALANNA LESLIE: New Zealand will start gradually re-opening its borders at the end of February.

The country's borders have been shut for nearly two years to the majority of people due to the pandemic.

New Zealanders living abroad will be allowed back in first, with students being allowed in from April and tourists not being allowed to enter until October.

This strict border policy has seen New Zealand only have 53 deaths and about 17,000 Covid cases, incredibly low numbers compared to much of the rest of the world.

But the challenge for the country now will be opening up after such severe isolation, without seeing a huge spike in COVID cases.



Mitski, The Only Heartbreaker

ALANNA LESLIE: That's *The Only Heartbreaker* by Japanese-American singer songwriter Mitski.

It's part of her first release in four years after she took a break from being a recording artist due to the physical and mental pressures success brought her.

Mitski was born in Japan but by the time she was eighteen she had lived in Turkey, China, Malaysia, Japan, the Czech Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo before returning to the United States.

ALANNA LESLIE: Elephants have a special place in the culture and history of India. But there's an ongoing issue with how elephants are treated in private hands and in zoos.

Our next story is about one elephant who has been treated appallingly for decades, and the people around the world trying to help him.

Chhavi Sachdev reports from Mumbai to tell us more...

Chhavi Sachdev: In 1998 the government of Zimbabwe in Africa sent two large gifts to India: a pair of African elephants. The female died only a few years later, and for the last 16 years, Shankar, the male elephant has been left alone in Delhi Zoo, pretty much forgotten until he caught the attention of Nikita Dewan.

Nikita Dewan: During the COVID pandemic, I felt like the whole feeling of being constricted within our homes, it allowed me to reflect on how animals feel in captivity. And it's not for their safety, but for our entertainment.

Chhavi Sachdev: Shankar is totally isolated.

He's kept in an enclosure surrounded by metal fencing very different to the natural environment African elephants thrive in.

When Nikita visited Shankar, he was exhibiting typical signs of depression like repetitive head bobbing and swaying in place.

Then she learned about a law that had already been passed in India, more than ten years ago.



Nikita Dewan: I had come across a 2009 legislation by the Central Zoo Authority, which controls all the zoos in India. And they had said that elephants cannot be kept in exhibitions in zoos. And this obviously hadn't been fulfilled, since we have three elephants in the Delhi zoo itself.

Chhavi Sachdev: So Nikita started an organisation, Youth For Animals. They began the #FreeShankar campaign with an online petition. As of February 8th, it had more than 150,000 signatures.

Chhavi Sachdev: They also sent a letter to the Delhi Zoo explaining their position and requesting Shankar's rehabilitation to Africa.

Youth For Animals then sent a legal follow up letter to the Prime Minister's Office and India's Ministry of Environment. Finally, with the aid of mentors and lawyers, they took the matter to court.

Nikita Dewan: It was pretty intimidating the whole idea of going to court, but I feel like once we had the scientific and legal research on why Shankar's captivity is not justified, it just made us a lot more confident in our case.

Chhavi Sachdev: It's not just about Shankar though. Youth For Animals say if Delhi Zoo rehabilitates him, it will set a precedent for all zoos and animal rights in India.

Increasingly, zoos are being criticised across the globe for being outdated and unnecessary, especially in an increasingly virtual world where people can learn and see anything on the internet.

But what do young people think about the treatment of elephants in India?

Arjuna Bhattacharya: I'm Arjuna Bhattacharya and I'm eighteen years old. In my opinion, this is not just about Shankar. It's about all animals in captivity. Elephants form bonds and live in herds. They need that bond to survive. I believe that we must set them free. They have every right to life and freedom, just as we do.

Arshiya Mahajan: My name is Arshiya. I'm eighteen years old. I believe that elephants are a force of nature. Keeping them confined within the four walls of a zoo away from their natural habitat will do more harm to our environment than good. Let us stand together for Shankar's sake.



Chetan G Wadhvani: My name is Chetan G Wadhvani. I strongly believe that the African elephant Shankar should not be held captive in the zoo, since it is deprived of its natural habitat, social structure and companionship.

Chhavi Sachdev: Youth for Animals has a court hearing on March 9th and they'll know Shankar's fate soon. For Newsreel World I'm Chhavi Sachdev in Mumbai, India.

ALANNA LESLIE: Thanks Chhavi. That's all from me today. Speak to you soon, bye!