CAN THE NEXT GENERATION GIVE US HOPE?

In the current parliament, a handful of lawmakers, all less than 45-years old, are representing their constituency. Most of them are well-educated. Contrary to grassroots politics, most young leaders are those who have either an influential political or business background. Two among them have even been entrusted with ministries, and are surprisingly doing a great job. *The Star* speaks to a few of these young MPs about their thoughts on the future of this country.

ANANTA YUSUF

Zunaid Ahmed Palak has proven that a grassroots leader with no political family background can become a State Minister solely through his determination and commitment to his work. Interestingly, Natore-3, Palak's constituency, had been dominated by BNP-Jamaat backed politicians who would always be chosen as representatives of the area for 30 years before Palak broke the cycle.

He started his political career in Singra Upazilla and became the general secretary of the upzalla unit Chatra League in 1999. Now as a State Minister of Telecommunication and Information Technology, he is planning to engage young people in more creative and lucrative jobs. Although it has only been five months since the incumbent government came to power, Palak is quite close to justifying his appointment as a state minister.

"It is true that we are only six months old. But apart from our routine work, we are planning to train young people through the Learning and Earning Development programmes to develop their skills and help them get outsourcing jobs," he says.

The ICT ministry started an individual programme called "Bari Boshe Borolok". Its core aim is to involve women in the outsourcing job market. Last year, the country earned $20 million from outsourcing jobs of the trainees. And the ministry is encouraging such training programmes to



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Zunaid Ahmed Palak