

THE WAKE UP GENERATION

There is something happening under the surface of an apparent foggy future. The young are waking up. Defying the obstacles of political deadlock and infrastructural handicaps, young men and women are pushing their creativity and intelligence to newer boundaries. This is the new generation of entrepreneurs, environmental activists, social workers and artists who have taken on the challenge of bringing about change – change that aims to take Bangladesh into a modern, technologically savvy, creatively growing, progressive minded future. *The Star* celebrates some of these brave, talented and inspiring young men and women.

MOHAMMAD RUHUL KADER

A one stop resource centre for young entrepreneurs

BY MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Ruhul's futurestartup.com has become a must go site for those who want to initiate their own businesses or organisations. It has been working as the lighthouse for young entrepreneurs and professionals. But Ruhul's own story of overcoming the odds is just as inspiring as the articles and interviews in his website.

While studying in the marketing department of Dhaka University Ruhul, with a few of his friends, decided to launch a new business. After a lot of discussion and careful planning they started to supply dried fish for departmental stores in Dhaka. Though it was a good start, different kinds of obstacles started to appear, the most serious ones being the lack of a hygienic packaging system and resources. Gradually this venture lost its momentum and Ruhul had to stop the project.

But this failure drove Ruhul to do something for thousands of young people in Bangladesh who have dreams of doing something on their own but don't know how to pursue their dreams. While working as a market researcher and business consultant after his studies Ruhul started to work passionately to develop futurestartup.com, an online platform where anyone will find the basic guidelines to start a business in Bangladesh. Ruhul says, "At first I and my four colleagues met with and talked to some of our successful entrepreneurs and social leaders. We explained our cause that we wanted to share their story to create thousands of more entrepreneurs like them. So gradually we got positive responses from different quarters. In futurestartup.com you will find interviews and case studies of 40 entrepreneurs and social leaders like Jerry Nicholson and Fiona Nicholson, Nazim Farhan Chowdhury, Iraj Islam etc. Many of them write for us voluntarily to share their experience with the youth."

Besides these interviews, there are hundreds of articles of different categories on business development, idea generation, challenges of different business and their solutions from respective experts. There are also tips such as how to get a trade license

in Bangladesh, how to get registration for your organisation. The site's "Idea" section, provides many lucrative ideas and projects for business which are less explored but have great potential in Bangladesh.

Another remarkable initiative of Ruhul and his team is the launching of a unique kind of conference with future entrepreneurs and the current leaders of different sectors which is called FS Talks. Forty potential entrepreneurs were selected to participate in a day long interactive discussion session with the business tycoons and social leaders. They counselled these young people so that they could implement their plans more effectively.

So what are his future plans? "I want to create a network between the established and potential entrepreneurs so that our youth find a direct path to successfully launch their projects. We have made

arrangements and soon we are going to open our chapter in India and Pakistan. A renowned UK based online business portal The Practitioners Hub is working in collaboration with us and publishing our articles in their website."

One of the biggest challenges of the country is providing jobs for its millions of unemployed youth. Initiatives like futurestartup.com can bring hope to these young men and women.



Mohammad Ruhul Kader

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS