

## SARAZEEN KAZI

### An entrepreneur helps business run better

BY AMITAVA KAR

Sarazeen Kazi is undoubtedly smart, but she does not have any of the neurotic self-consciousness or self-doubt that usually accompanies exceptional intelligence. Her faith in what she does is total.

She is the co-founder and managing director of SS Solutions, a SAP gold partner in Bangladesh. In just about three years, it has become a quintessential icon of youthful success having more than 50 top Bangladeshi companies as clients. "We help compa-

Georgetown University in Washington, USA. Graduating in just three years, she came back to Bangladesh to work at her father's steel factory.

Instead of taking a shortcut to success, she started working at the shop floor—where lower level employees work on machines. The only woman in the entire factory, she wanted to learn the business processes from bottom to top. "If you want to earn the respect of the labourers, you have to prove that you understand their work," her father had said to

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nies run better by increasing profit and lowering costs," she confidently says.

SAP (an acronym for Systems, Applications and Products) is a German software company that is a market leader in Enterprise Resource Planning—the planning and managing of resources—the three M's: men, material and money. It has more than 263,000 companies as customers in 188 countries. "It is said that more than 74 percent of the world's financial transaction touches on SAP. I see a great potential here in the future."

Sarazeen's is an unusual story for many reasons. For one thing, she does not have a background in software—she studied Physics and Mathematics in

her. So for two and a half years she did shift duties, roster duties, learned how to run the crane and worked in the scrap yard—hand in hand with the blue collar workers, eventually assuming the position of manager, operations.

Then about three years ago a new idea emerged. Her husband, Alex, a German national and long-time employee of SAP, Germany was considering relocating to Bangladesh to be with her. For the first two years he continued to work remotely from here. During that time, the couple thought whether they could establish an SAP partnership company here. But Bangladesh is under SAP, India and they were trying to absorb Alex. So SAP suggested becoming

their partner in Bangladesh. "They felt confident that with my name, reputation and business background, I was the right person."

The proposal was flattering but she wasn't sure. So she sought the advice of her father, football legend and noted businessman Kazi Salahuddin who is also a friend, philosopher and guide. "You don't need to know software. It's like running any other business.

gives real-time information. You don't have to ask your CFO; you can get it on your iPhone. Most of the business people are firefighting. They do damage control. A tool like SAP helps them take preventive measures."

Sarazeen has higher aspirations. She wants to make it a household name in Bangladesh and more affordable for Bangladeshi companies. "Right now,



Sarazeen Kazi

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

You set it up. You get the team. You get it going," he had said to her. "If it works, it gives Alex an opportunity to stay in Bangladesh."

She did make it work—so well that recently her company won the largest ever public sector tender for automating taxation automation for the entire country. "By adopting SAP, Square has been able to reduce inventory by 50 percent. That means 50 percent less working capital for them."

Managing inventory is just one example. "SAP also helps manage sales, quality, productivity and

our implementation resources are from Singapore, India and Germany. We are working on establishing SAP certified global education centres in campuses in Bangladesh. Graduates will be able to earn a global certification which will give them an edge in getting jobs at companies like Dell, IBM and Accenture. And if I can hire local graduates, who do not have this skill right now, our product will be more affordable."

With her determination and intelligence the only way she can go is forward. ■