



Mustafizur R Khan

MUSTAFIZUR R KHAN

Helping Startups to Start

BY UPASHANA SALAM

Startup Dhaka started as a crowd funded documentary, raising over \$9000 from 56 backers around the world in 50 days. The documentary sought to tell the story of new technology startups in Dhaka. As these companies are basically set up by mostly inexperienced individuals, they don't usually get the investment from banks or other financial institutes.

"In order to get funding from a bank, entrepreneurs usually need to ensure a guarantee or mortgage

something," says founder and CEO of Startup Dhaka, Mustafizur R Khan. "Startup Dhaka links young entrepreneurs and initiators with prospective investors. We also have a job network through which graduates learn of potential job opportunities."

He is constantly conceiving new ideas that can help reshape the concept of entrepreneurship in the country. The Wave, for example, is a co-working space in the city, enabling young businesspersons to work out the details of their endeavour, interact with

other first time entrepreneurs, and even host meetings with prospective clients.

Startup Dhaka's recently concluded event Innovation Xtreme had over 29 reputed speakers from e-commerce, management consultation and venture capital firms who shared their experiences, and spoke about the manifold aspects of the business world. Moreover, three growth stage technology companies were showcased while ten startup companies pitched their ideas to prominent local and international investors.

"We had a Demo Day in Grameen Bank with ten startups and two startup companies are currently in talks with international companies that are

“ We want to be the voice of the whole South Asian region, not just Bangladesh. We aim to have links with startups in Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and other countries so that we are aware of what's happening outside Bangladesh. ”



Startup Dhaka organised Innovation Xtreme which saw the participation of businesses from all over the world.

interested in investing in their project," says Khan, who is in his 30's. Startup Dhaka, thus, offers young entrepreneurs the visibility and platform to present their ideas to a larger, more receptive audience. The organisation also offers training to young entrepreneurs as they organise workshops and help startups to develop their capacity.

Khan says that even though the idea of online content sites is slowly receiving wider recognition from mainstream traditional media, not every

organisation has a proper knowledge or insight on domains. "As the head team of Startup Dhaka comprises of mainly entrepreneurs, we understand the challenges faced by young businesspeople in the country," says Khan.

"We want to be the voice of the whole South Asian region, not just Bangladesh. We aim to have links with startups in Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and other countries so that we are aware of what's happening in outside Bangladesh," concludes Khan. ■