

AGENTS OF CHANGE

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Esrat Karim Eve



Raba Khan

Catching up with Forbes 30 under 30 Honourees from Bangladesh

According to UNFPA, nearly 220 million people in Bangladesh are the youth, which makes up 20 percent of the country's total current population. Over the years, several successful young changemakers were featured in Forbes' 30 under 30 Asia list for their outstanding contributions in their respective fields. They are a source of inspiration and hope for Bangladesh. On The Daily Star's 30th anniversary, we caught up with these youth icons, to learn about their current activities, future plans and most importantly, their views on the thriving young population.

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

Raba Khan Entertainer

Raba Khan was featured in the Forbes 30 under 30 Asia list, under the category, Media, Marketing & Advertising in 2020. Mostly known for her satirical videos, she is the youngest person from Bangladesh to be recognised by Forbes. As a testimony to her influence, UNICEF selected Raba as a Youth Ambassador to advocate for children's rights in November 2018.

Apart from being busy with producing engaging content for her audience, her own personal projects and brand involvements, Raba is busy with her



Hussain Elius

starting from audience acceptance to brand involvement, and the sustainability of stand-up comedy has increased tremendously," shares Raba. "People now understand that there are more options to choose from, than just being doctors or engineers. Stand-up comedy is no longer just a hobby or a part time activity, it is a potential long-term career option."

"You have to start now as the competition will always continue to grow," says Raba, advising young, aspiring comedians. "You don't need any high branded technical gadgets. You just need a phone to start your projects. The most important factor is to never follow

someone else, and to just be yourself in this profession."

Esrat Karim Eve Founder, AMAL Foundation

Esrat Karim was featured in the Forbes 30 under 30 Asia list under the category, Social Entrepreneurs for founding the non-profit organisation AMAL Foundation, in 2020. The foundation, working with more than 52,000 villages across the country, has made a significant impact over the years.

AMAL Foundation focuses on four primary aspects: Education, Health, Empowerment, and Emergency Crisis. "We want to expand our projects on

Education & Health, primarily in the 'chor' areas of the country," shares Esrat. "We aim to develop research activities in the field of development and plan to collaborate with different institutions to be recognised internationally."

During the ongoing pandemic, AMAL Foundation helped in distributing food packages, winter clothes, provided care for stray animals, supported short term investments, and partnered up with different organisations across the country. "Our plan is to double the number of beneficiaries, implement more projects, bring in new partners, and collaborate with more grassroot-level organisations," shares Esrat about AMAL Foundation's future plan.

Esrat believes the prospects of social business increased tremendously over the years. "It is a golden era for the youth, they know more about social business now than before. They are learning more about this sector and they are successfully implementing their ideas," shares a hopeful Esrat.

"We are facing something we haven't faced in the last hundred years. So, the youth should consider how they can cope up with changing times, what innovation they should focus on and how to sustain their social businesses," Esrat says, urging young entrepreneurs to face the challenges of the pandemic.

Hussain Elius Co-founder, Pathao

Hussain Elius, one of the co-founders of Pathao, was featured in Forbes 30 under 30 Asia list under the category of Consumer Technology, in 2019. Pathao, the leading ride-sharing, on-demand logistics and food delivery platform in Bangladesh, has been the most popular ride sharing app of recent times.

"We are building our delivery infrastructure, food delivery business, e-commerce business, increasing partnerships and we are focusing on geographical expansion of Pathao in other cities," shares Hussain about Pathao's future plans.

According to Hussain Elius, every crisis presents an opportunity and entrepreneurs have to be smart to realise these opportunities to strive in the post-pandemic world. "We learned new things, realised new perspectives during this crisis and now, the entrepreneurs must utilise these learnings to understand and serve the changing markets," he says.

He further shares his views on how the cultural, social and structural problems in Bangladesh are not favourable for entrepreneurs. "Environment for developing entrepreneurship is difficult in our country. However, difficulties can also

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responsibilities as a Youth Ambassador for UNICEF. She plans to focus more on her projects with children in the upcoming years.

"The stand-up comedy scene in Bangladesh has been changing positively,