

BANGLADESH IN 2030

Leapfrogging into the startup future



Adnan Imtiaz Halim
is founder and CEO of Sheba Platform Limited.

ADNAN IMTIAZ HALIM

Imagine this: Bangladesh in 2030 is not just a country, but a shining example of what people can achieve together. Innovation, hard work, and hope have transformed our nation. The streets of Dhaka are cleaner and smarter, with systems run by artificial intelligence. Small businesses grow rapidly, using e-commerce to reach the world. Clean energy lights up homes, and self-driving vehicles transport goods from villages to cities.

Let us discover how Bangladesh can become a global leader through startups, technology, and inclusivity. Below is a roadmap to building a brighter future for all.

It's 2025, and Bangladesh is at an exciting turning point. The world is changing quickly with new technologies, ideas, and brave entrepreneurs. In 2024, when Donald Trump was re-elected, his focus on advancing artificial intelligence and empowering tech startups inspired many nations to rethink their strategies. Trump's policies promoted innovation in leading tech companies, showcasing how technology could shape a nation's future. While debates unfolded in the West, countries like China, India, and Indonesia continued building stronger startup ecosystems. Today, China leads

in artificial intelligence, India has created over \$100 billion companies, and Indonesia is the startup leader of Southeast Asia. Bangladesh now faces the same big question: Will we wait and watch, or will we build our future through startups?

We must act wisely and move fast. Like in a game of chess, we need the right moves to win. Just like Doctor Strange, who had to choose the one victorious path out of 14 million probabilities, Bangladesh must identify and act on the best strategies for success. Here's how Bangladesh can lead the way with startups by 2030.

1) POLICIES THAT HELP STARTUPS GROW

We need innovative and straightforward policies that directly support innovation to achieve our ambitious targets. For example, India made it easy for startups to register, offered tax benefits, and created funds to

help new businesses. Bangladesh needs to

Be the facilitator, not the regulator: Focus on enabling growth through rewards and incentives for solving significant national problems, as the government did for the RMG sector, India did for UPI, and America did for EVs. Reduce unnecessary regulatory hurdles.

Make registration easy: Develop a one-stop business portal for startups and SMEs to quickly register and comply with regulations. Allow startups to register in foreign countries like Singapore, enabling them to access global markets and investment opportunities. Encourage local and non-resident Bangladeshi (NRB) angels and investors to invest in those startups globally, fostering a truly international ecosystem.

Tax benefits for startups and SMEs: Offer affordable, friendly tax policies to encourage more businesses to enter the

tax net. Plan for a decade-long strategy rather than yearly collection targets. Introduce incentives to encourage cashless transactions, promote the use of modern apps, and connect these private systems to a national data lake for greater efficiency and transparency. With supportive policies, bypassing the system will become unnecessary.

Government-backed funds: Launch a fund to attract billions in foreign investment and support high-potential startups. Provide tax benefits to investors who fund startups and SMEs, and create easy exit options to encourage more participation from local and foreign investors.

With these policies, Bangladesh can become one of the top 30 countries in the Ease of Doing Business ranking.

2) USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) FOR GROWTH

AI is essential for driving innovation and meeting our 2030 goals. It helps companies grow faster and deliver better results. For example, AI helps Alibaba understand customers, powers fintech solutions in India, and streamlines logistics in Indonesia. Bangladesh must:

Adopt AI across sectors: Enable startups and SMEs to leverage AI for customer insights, operational efficiency, and global competitiveness. Use AI to empower people—like wearing Ironman's suit with a virtual assistant like JARVIS—providing tools to solve problems and innovate.

AI in fintech: Use AI to provide small business or personal loans and promote a cashless economy with digital payment systems. Build a strong credit bureau system that integrates AI to establish reliable social scoring for individuals and businesses, fostering trust and financial inclusion.

AI for logistics: Streamline supply chains and improve cross-border trade for SMEs using AI-powered solutions.

VISUAL: ANWER SOHEL



FIVE KEY AREAS TO FOCUS ON

- » Policies that help startups grow
- » Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for growth
- » Building Dhaka valley: A unique startup ecosystem
- » Solving real problems and empowering everyone
- » Five ambitious targets for 2030

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

2025

CBC DAILY

COMMERCIAL BANK



February, 2025

16734

www.combank.net.bd

Hadi Tower, House No. NW(K)-1
Road No. 30, Kemal Ataturk Avenue
Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212

A LEGACY OF INFORMATION & FINANCE

Congratulations
The Daily Star
(ON FOURTH ANNIVERSARY)

For over three decades,
The Daily Star has informed, inspired,
and influenced generations.

100+ YEARS OF LEGACY
20+ YEARS OF TRUST IN BANGLADESH
14 CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF "5A" RATING

FROM CREDIT TO THE FUTURE OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

COMMERCIAL BANK OF CEYLON PLC
BANGLADESH OPERATIONS