



Episode 247

Tahreem Shah

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Global Startup Success: Tahreem Shah on Scalable Tech and Ethical AI

In this episode of the [DevReady Podcast](#), host [Anthony Sapountzis](#) sits down with [Tahreem Shah](#), an accomplished entrepreneur, Regional Business Advisor at [Odoo](#), and Co-Founder of [Scailr](#). With a career spanning architecture, tech sales, and social entrepreneurship, Tahreem brings a unique perspective on building impactful ventures across borders. From her early days working in Norway to her current base in Dubai, she has dedicated herself to empowering marginalised communities and creating technology solutions that bridge the gap between business and innovation. This candid conversation explores her inspiring journey, the realities of scaling startups in emerging markets, and her latest venture aimed at transforming how founders interact with business data.

Anthony and Tahreem unpack the opportunities and barriers within Bangladesh's startup ecosystem, where infrastructure and policy limitations often stifle promising, tech-driven ventures. Tahreem shares examples like ShopUp's rare success story of scaling internationally through acquisition, while reflecting on her own experience learning from a seasoned ex-Google engineer. Together, they highlight the crucial need for founders to align product features with clear value propositions to succeed both locally and globally. Tahreem's insights offer a nuanced look at the challenges of translating local innovation into broader markets and the importance of bridging technical and business perspectives.

The conversation explores the complexities of building startups in hyperlocal contexts, where strategies such as agent-led onboarding and education campaigns are necessary to reach non-digitised communities. Tahreem illustrates how these efforts helped her navigate Bangladesh's unique landscape, but also underscores how achieving product-market fit at home doesn't guarantee success abroad. The discussion reveals how differences in infrastructure, technology adoption, and user behaviour between regions make global scalability a far more complex challenge than often assumed. Anthony and Tahreem agree that understanding these nuances is vital before attempting to expand beyond familiar markets.

Tahreem recounts the deeply personal decision to pause her first startup, Bhorosha, following her co-founder's struggles after a traumatic event, despite its recognition on global stages such as Unleashed and Dragon's Den India. Transitioning to Antler's Entrepreneur in Residence programme, she describes how her initial idea of leveraging Bangladesh's garment industry evolved into Scailr. Mentor feedback pushed her and John to move beyond regional solutions and build a cutting-edge global product, highlighting the resilience, adaptability, and alignment required to pivot successfully in the face of shifting market realities.

Delving into Scailr's development, Tahreem shares how the platform aims to become a "business co-pilot", enabling executives to converse with their data to make informed, strategic decisions. Prioritising data security and ethical standards, Scailr has partnered with academic experts to ensure responsible data handling while providing contextual, actionable insights. Tahreem explains how advances in generative AI allowed them to leverage evolving models instead of building their own, saving resources and accelerating development. The episode closes with a discussion on the importance of fostering a company culture that empowers innovation and the need for founders to focus on solving real problems rather than assuming funding alone will drive success.

Topics Covered

- Challenges and opportunities in Bangladesh's tech ecosystem
- Achieving product-market fit in hyperlocal markets
- Scaling startups beyond local demographics
- The emotional journey of pausing Bhorosha, a social impact venture
- Evolution of startup ideas during Antler's Entrepreneur in Residence programme
- Creation and vision behind Scailr as a "business co-pilot"
- Ethical data handling and collaboration with AI researchers
- Common misconceptions about funding and sustainable startup growth


Important Time Stamps

- From Dhaka to Dubai: Tahreem's Journey to Tech Leadership (0:07 – 5:47)
- Building Beyond Borders: Lessons from Bangladesh's Startup Challenges (5:48 – 10:00)
- How Education Campaigns Drive Tech Adoption in Developing Nations (10:01 – 16:02)
- From Bangladesh's Garments to Global Tech: The Pivot Journey (16:03 – 21:14)
- Inside Scailr's Vision: Turning Raw Data into Actionable Growth (21:15 – 25:59)
- Riding the AI Wave: Adapting Fast in a Changing Tech Landscape (26:00 – 30:20)
- Why Funding Isn't the Answer: Hard Truths for Startup Founders (30:21 – 33:39)

Useful Links

[Tahreem Shah | LinkedIn](#)[Odoo | LinkedIn](#)[Odoo | Website](#)[Scailr | LinkedIn](#)[Scailr | Website](#)

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