



# The Telegraph

calcutta, india

Follow Us: [f](#) [t](#) [r](#) Today's Edition

| Thursday , April 18 , 2013 |

## IN TODAY'S PAPER

Front Page  
 Nation  
 Calcutta  
 Bengal  
 Opinion  
 International  
 Business  
 Sports  
 Entertainment  
 Sudoku  
 Sudoku New **BETA**  
 Crossword  
 Jumble  
 Gallery  
 Horse Racing  
 Press Releases  
 Travel

## WEEKLY FEATURES

7 days  
 Graphiti  
 Knowhow  
 Jobs  
**Careergraph**  
 Howrah  
 Salt Lake

## CITIES AND REGIONS

Metro  
 North Bengal  
 Northeast  
 Jharkhand  
 Bihar  
 Odisha

## ARCHIVES

Since 1st March, 1999

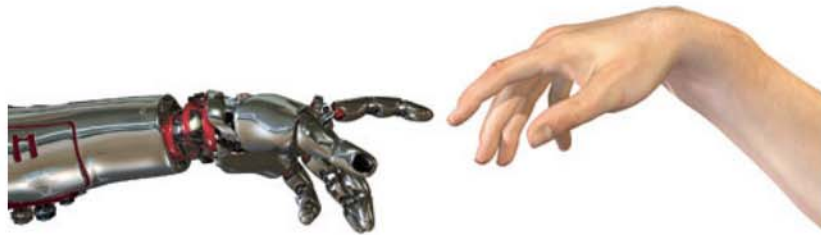
## THE TELEGRAPH

- About Us  
 - Advertise  
 - Feedback  
 - Contact Us


[Front Page](#) > [Careergraph](#) > [Story](#)
 32  5 

## Help for budding businessmen

Are you an aspiring engineer with a great idea? You'll find many who'll help you turn the idea into a business, discovers **Moumita Chakrabarti**



T.S. Shanmugha obtained admission to the mechanical engineering course of Dayanand Sagar College in Bangalore. His dream was to get a job in an auto or auto ancillary company like BMW or Bosch when he passed out. Life, however, had other plans for him. Still in the final year, Shanmugha is now interviewing — not for his first job but to recruit people.

About a year and a half ago, Shanmugha started a company, Botrio Design Labs, to design and develop apps and learning tools for students as well as do innovative work in the robotics field.

What inspired this change of heart? Why did he prefer to be a struggling entrepreneur instead of taking up a cushy job? Well, he discovered robotics in college and life was never the same, says Shanmugha.

The young student used to take part in robotics competitions. One such competition was partnered by the Mumbai-based National Entrepreneurship Network (NEN), run by the Wadhvani Foundation. This organisation, with funding from the Department of Science and Technology (DST), has taken it upon itself to help students become entrepreneurs. Students may have ideas that have the potential to be commercially successful but most of them lack the skills necessary to become an entrepreneur. "Most colleges provide theory-based learning and application learning is neglected. Ideally, an engineering student should be aware of real life situations and what industry or customers want. They have to work on real life ideas and not projects on paper," asserts Sunita Singh, co-founder of NEN.

NEN has been trying to bridge this gap between technology and entrepreneurship for the last two-and-a-half years. "From the second year onwards, we encourage student to talk to companies, find out real-life issues and look for solutions instead of doing a six-month project," says Singh. To encourage students, competitions are held and the best five or six project ideas selected. These are provided initial support, mentoring and then placed in the market. Shanmugha was one of the lucky ones.

"Competitions are a good platform to showcase your innovative ideas," he says. "Not the least because it gives you access to investors." The good Samaritan who put down big money for Shanmugha to grow his business had been impressed by the robotics enthusiast at one such competition.

Shanmugha is one of a growing tribe. With the economic slowdown affecting the job market for engineers adversely, entrepreneurship seems to be an option to consider. Many engineering students are coming up with innovative products. And NEN as well as many colleges are encouraging them to turn their ideas into commercially viable business ventures.

After having been mentored by NEN, Abhishek Humbad and Richa Bajpai founded



NextGenPMS Pvt. Ltd in 2009, which generates cheap bio-fuels and operates in six countries with Fortune 500 clients in over 16 sectors. Ditto, Gaurav Dahake and Rohit Shah who started Buy Hatke in 2012, a website that compares the prices of a product on various online shopping portals and provides the best deal to the customer.

"It is important to encourage students to come up with innovative ideas in the field of technology," says Sujit Banerjee, director, DST, which has come up with "Timeis", a project that is being implemented by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci), the apex chamber of commerce. "It guides students about the what and how of starting a business," says Banerjee. Timeis works hand in hand with engineering colleges. They sponsor the basic research while colleges offer training programmes, infrastructure and logistic support.



(From left) Ankit Mehta, Amardeep Singh, Ashish Bhat, Vipul Joshi and Rahul Singh of IdeaForge

Timeis has developed technical consultancies at the state level. In West Bengal, the West Bengal Consultancy Organisation (Webcon) offers six to eight-week programmes for budding entrepreneurs. It teaches students to prepare a detailed report, do a market survey as well as provides them with logistics and infrastructural support.

Timeis also has a technology business incubator (TBI) where youngsters can hire office space for a nominal rent. It offers them mentoring as well as seed capital. Once students feel confident enough, they leave the incubator for the big, bad world.

Their relationship with Timeis doesn't, however, end here. Its technology development board (TDB) keeps track of their progress, offers them soft loans to scale up, does the checks and balances for them and also helps them market their product. While TBI has a total fund of Rs 3 crore that it divides among students, TDB has no such limit but you have to have a really great product to win its support.



Nikhil Jain (extreme left) of IITB co-founded a solar power company

While both NEN and DST are doing a great job of encouraging students to become technopreneurs, IIT Kharagpur (IITKgp) beat them to the post a long time ago. "The entrepreneurship cell at IITKgp was established in 2005 and soon after we had the Science and Technology Entrepreneurs' Park (Step) which supported students' activities and helped them develop their business model," says Dhruves Biswas, head of the Rajendra Mishra School of Engineering Entrepreneurship and managing director of Step. The Rajendra Mishra School, started in 2009, offers a five-year dual degree





(BTech and MTech) programme. It offers a product development course, which means in the five years students are trained in several fields pertaining to entrepreneurial management. Students are given internal as well as external mentors and are forced to think about innovative ideas that would fulfil customer demand and create prototypes. "Such in depth thinking results in academic output which is not merely a certificate but a company of their own," says Biswas.

He encourages students to find solutions for problems in the locality. One such solution won them the Global Academy Cup in 2010 in a competition in which 50 countries participated.

Their project was the Global Scalable Health Delivery product or the health kiosk that students had designed for the poor people of Medinipur district. These kiosks would scan you and could diagnose a disease before it attacked you — for example, it would tell you about an impending heart attack so that you could seek medical help before it was too late. It meant that the poor would not have to spend money on doctors for every ailment and could visit a hospital only when really necessary. Today these health kiosks exist in Bardhaman, Durgapur, Guskara, Siuri and Medinipur.

Till date, IITKgp students have started at least 70 companies. Swetank Jain set up a company named P2P Power Solution Private Ltd that develops energy management hardware that reduces the power bill by 10 per cent. Soumen Chakrabarty founded Intellisys Technologies Pvt. Ltd, which is now the best video conferencing system company after Polycom, having pushed Cisco to third place. Ajoy Modani is the owner of Capillary Technologies Pvt Ltd, it runs the backend software of Big Bazaar and its parent company (the Future group).

IIT-Bombay set up an incubation cell called SINE in 2004. When third year student Sumit Chhazad and final year student Nikhil Jain wanted to start an alternative power generation business, SINE helped them set up their office at the incubation cell on campus. SINE provides students with a office set-up, shared facilities like meeting rooms, conference rooms, uninterrupted power supply, access to the SINE network of mentors, advisors, investors and gives seed funding in certain cases. "Subsidised rent is charged for the space that they use as their office and ours is an equity based consideration model," says C.V.Krishnaveni, professor in charge at SINE.

Says Ankit Mehta, who started IdeaForge Technology Pvt. Ltd in 2007, "SINE was a great place to start our entrepreneurial journey. They were extremely patient with us while we were developing our product, without much funding. They even supported us by providing us with some seed capital. What also greatly helps at that age is the presence of a senior, more experienced, team to bounce ideas and problems off. It does wonders to team morale and calms down nerves, if any." IdeaForge makes unmanned aerial vehicles for security and surveillance.

Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu) too is starting up an entrepreneurship cell and a business incubator this year. It will offer initial handholding, infrastructure and logistic support. The cell has already received about five project ideas from students.

Sramana Mitra, founder of One Million by One Million (1M/1M) says, "Engineering students do not have the business knowledge to get a company going. 1M/1M provides that business education in a very compressed, quick and clear way. We offer a case study-based online educational programme, video lectures, lean, capital-efficient methodology guidance, online strategy consulting at public and private roundtables, as well as introductions to customers, channel partners and investors." 1M/1M is a for-profit organisation that offers aspiring entrepreneurs logistic support and connects them to funding sources.

With it becoming so much easier to set up a business, prepare for the rise of the technopreneur.

Their project was the Global Scalable Health Delivery product or the health kiosk that students had designed for the poor people of Medinipur district. These kiosks would scan you and could diagnose a disease before it attacked you — for example, it would tell you about an impending heart attack so that you could seek medical help before it was too late. It meant that the poor would not have to spend money on doctors for every ailment and could visit a hospital only when really necessary. Today these health kiosks exist in Bardhaman, Durgapur, Guskara, Siuri and Medinipur.

To date, IITKgp students have started at least 70 companies. Swetank Jain set up a company named P2P Power Solution Private Ltd that develops energy management hardware that reduces the power bill by 10 per cent. Soumen Chakrabarty founded Intellisys Technologies Pvt. Ltd, which now has the best video conferencing system after Polycom, having pushed Cisco to third place. Ajoy Modani owned Capillary Technologies Pvt. Ltd runs the backend software of Big Bazaar and its parent company, the Future group.

IIT-Bombay set up an incubation cell called SINE in 2004. When third year student Sumit Chhazad and final year student Nikhil Jain wanted to start an alternative power generation business, they turned to SINE. It provides students with a office set-up, shared facilities like conference rooms, uninterrupted power supply, access to the SINE network of mentors, advisors, investors and gives seed funding in certain cases. "Subsidised rent is charged for the office space and ours is an equity based

consideration model,” says C.V.Krishnaveni, professor in charge at SINE.



(Left) A model designed by Botrio Labs and (right) IdeaForge's drone

Says Ankit Mehta, who started IdeaForge Technology Pvt. Ltd in 2007, “SINE was a great place to start our entrepreneurial journey. They were extremely patient with us while we were developing our product, without much funding. They even supported us by providing some seed capital. What also greatly helped was the presence of a senior, more experienced, team to bounce ideas and problems off.” IdeaForge makes unmanned aerial vehicles for security and surveillance.

Bengal Engineering and Science University too is starting up an entrepreneurship cell and a business incubator this year. It will offer initial handholding, infrastructure and logistic support. The cell has already received about five project ideas from students.

“Engineering students do not have the business knowledge to get a company going,” says Sramana Mitra, founder of One Million by One Million (1M/1M) says. “We provide that business education in a very compressed, quick and clear way.” 1M/1M is a for-profit organisation that offers aspiring entrepreneurs logistic support and connects them to funding sources.

With it becoming so much easier to set up a business, prepare for the rise of the technopreneur.

## SUCCESS STORIES

### BIOSYL TECHNOLOGIES

Has designed an anaerobic workstation that will provide researchers a quick and easy way to culture anaerobes, which are potential producers of several industrial products. In its start-up phase, the company has already contracted 10 per cent of its first year's projected sales.

**Founders:** Amit Kumar Vernekar, Sarah Pearl D'souza

**Year of founding:** July, 2012

**Institute:** B.V. Bhoomaraddi College of Engineering and Technology, Hubli

### BOTRIO DESIGN LABS PVT. LTD

Designs and develops experiential learning tools for schools and colleges. It also offers training in robotics, embedded systems, aeromodeling and mobile apps.

**Founder:** (in pic right) Shanmugha T.S.

**Year of founding:** August, 2011

**Institute:** Dayananda Sagar College of Engineering, Bangalore



### DREAMSCRAFT

Manufactures fiber sofas with an innovative design

**Founder:** Mirza Faaiz Ali

**Year of founding:** September, 2012

**Institute:** Acropolis Institute of Technology and Research, Indore

### SILICON SOFTWARES

Designs IT solutions for small and medium retail sectors in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities.

**Founder:** Satyabrata Bishwal

**Year of founding:** January, 2009

**Institute:** Ajay Binay Institute of Technology, Cuttack

### INFINITY PLUS ONE

Is the brainchild of three aspiring engineers and deals with quality PC maintenance and repair, eye-catching graphic design, data entry and documentation.

**Founder:** Aadithya Aigal

**Year of founding:** March, 2011

**Institute:** National Institute of Engineering, Mysore

#### ENCHANTER CORPORATION

Is a campus company which makes online courses for engineering students. It offers technical courses such as .Net training, phone application development, robotics and Arduino courses.

**Founders:** Gautam.K, Krithika.P\

**Year of founding:** September, 2012

**Institute:** KCG College of Technology, Chennai

#### MUKUNDA FOODS PVT. LTD

Plans to design food machines for use in the retail segment. A table-top dosa machine has already been conceptualised, designed and prototyped.

**Founder:** Eshwar Vikas (in pic, right)

**Year of founding:** May, 2012

**Institute:** SRM Engineering College, Chennai



Source: NEN

#### HELP AT HAND

- National Entrepreneurship Network ([www.nenonline.org](http://www.nenonline.org)): Provides support to start-ups through entrepreneurship education, fast-track access to incubators and funding. It has tie-ups with 470 top institutions to help and support new entrepreneurs
- The Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship, IIM, Ahmedabad ([www.ciieindia.org](http://www.ciieindia.org)): Provides physical incubation support comprising office space on IIM campus with state-of-the-art facilities like computing, conferencing, network connectivity and library, among others. It invests up to Rs 50 lakh in start-ups that it helps incubate
- Indian Angel Network (<http://indianangelnetwork.com>): Invests in the early stage of businesses that have the potential to create value. Members have strong operational experience as CEOs and in creating new and successful ventures. Start-ups can submit business plans online for monetary support

Like < 32 Tweet < 5 0



Copyright © 2013 The Telegraph. All rights reserved.

[Disclaimer](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#)