

A trucker's journey from anonymity to fame

The winner of Fuelwatch 2012 Malaysia chapter, moving on to represent his country in the regional finale and an everyday trucker finding his footing in a place he has always deserved, Roslan Bin Md Ali is a happy man today. Having returned just recently from his first international trip all the way to Australia, Roslan is developing a new world view, one that opens up his horizons to new achievements he didn't know existed just a few short months ago. He speaks to us about his life, his recent journey and learnings from suddenly finding himself in the midst of attention from the media as well as one of the biggest truck brands in the world.

Just listening to Roslan talk about his journey from anonymity to fame, is inspiring. A humble start as a factory worker immediately after high school, Roslan moved to trucking more than 6 years ago.

Speaking on his life at the factory, Roslan says, "It was a learning experience, a good place to start my life as a responsible man making a living on his own." He was surrounded by machinery and that was the first time he understood science and technique.

"But a 9 to 5 job was not my scene. I like the road – and the idea of being out driving for days, always excited me," Roslan adds.

His love for the road and the curiosity about a truck driver's life eventually got him to driving trucks. Ever since, it has been an uphill journey, "albeit a tiring one sometimes", Roslan smiles.

When you talk to Roslan, he comes across as someone who has managed to find the perfect balance between passion and energy, and humility. He is usually quiet, answering in crisp sentences but when you talk to him about trucks and Fuelwatch, he suddenly exudes intense passion and enthusiasm.

He has no complaints about spending long hours or days

touring the Malaysian highways. He loves his life as truck driver. "I have worked within the four walls of a factory and suddenly when I took to the roads, I felt free. The road springs up wonderful surprises. A classic car convoy here, a hitchhiker there. In short, mine is an interesting profession."

Roslan's assignments usually involve two trips in a day, starting from and returning to Port Klang. On some days, he tours all the way up to Northern Malaysia in one long driving spree.



“ I AM A VOLVO FAN BOY!

When asked about the truck brand he admires, he is quick to respond “Volvo!”.

“When you drive a Volvo, you realize that their trucks are made keeping the long drives and our requirements in mind. Fully automatic, hassle free, and easy functionality at the press of a button – there is not much else that a die-hard trucker expects from his ride. He adds that Volvo trucks are so easy to handle that not much special training is required to drive them. “And yet, what I admire about the brand is their dedication in training us on how to best utilize everything that Volvo has to offer in their vehicles so that we can be the best among the best and in our own way, help our employers save costs.”

Fuelwatch is one such initiative. “It must have been a daunting task for the Volvo team to travel across Malaysia to train and test so many truck drivers on fuel efficient driving techniques. But I think it was their dedication that made it possible year after year. Right from the day I enrolled for the challenge, I learned something new everyday.”

“When my predecessor Adnan was made the 2012 Fuelwatch Ambassador 2012 for Globe Truckers, I looked at his position wistfully. It is a great honour to represent a platform I share with truck drivers from across the country. I am there today, and I am so full of pride! I am now the 2013 Ambassador and I promise I will do my best to spread the Fuel Saving message to all my colleagues out there”

“Then there is Globe Truckers. Never before has there been such a club for truck drivers like me. We always felt like we were standing at the fringe in a society that looked down upon our profession which they thought was classy.



But with Globe Truckers, it is uplifting who truck drivers really are, which are the movers and shakers of the transport industry. Without us, the market will come to a standstill as no goods would be delivered thus creating a huge discrepancy between supply and demand. Now I see how important I am to the world and it makes me proud to call myself a truck driver.”

“I speak on behalf of all my fellow truckers that we are grateful to Volvo for engaging with us and uplifting our horizons so often,”

When asked about his recent Australian sojourn for the Fuelwatch APAC Finals, you see a hint of disappointment on his face. But he is quick to add, “There is always next year. Winning would have been good, but the lessons I learned, the sights I saw, the people I interacted with, and the experiences I had in Australia will stay with me forever. I can always win next year.”

“My wife and children are proud of me for not only winning the challenge in Malaysia but to be the first one in the family to get onto a flight and travel overseas. What more could I want?” He smiles and that said it all.



Taipanco Sdn Bhd – The perfect employer

Moving on to the topic of his employer, Taipanco Sdn Bhd, Roslan says that he has had a very long association with the company. He speaks about the benefits he gets from his employer. But according to Roslan, what makes them one of the best people to work for in this business, is that they understand the need for motivation in a profession that can sometimes be physically and mentally exhausting, what with the long hours spent behind the wheel and away from families.

Roslan adds, “Fuelwatch was an eye opening experience not only for truckers but also for my employer. We have now started an internal competition based on the lines of Fuelwatch.” Roslan expects this competition to prepare him and other drivers of Taipanco for Fuelwatch 2013.

“I am sharing my learnings with my fellow colleagues. Next year, with these learnings and applying smart techniques to our everyday driving routine, in addition to the internal competition, we hope to make Taipanco and Volvo proud of having us on the team. A year of preparation will help all of us not only ace Fuelwatch but also become better drivers.”

Roslan – The family man

Despite being the macho trucker and a man of the road that Roslan is, somewhere deep down is a responsible father and husband who likes his quiet time off with his family. His weekends are usually spent in the company of his small family. His two children are the apple of his eye. And he has big plans for them. He says, “What else is a father’s hard work for? I want to give my children the best education and comforts that I can provide.”

Ambitious, driven, passionate, and humble – Roslan is an interesting trucker. But when we saw him enjoy his sunny Sunday at the Volvo Malaysia Carnival recently, wife and kids in tow, we also realized that he is a good father, a good man. Here is to wishing Roslan the best that life has to offer! ■