



Shaf Rasul, with his latest Aston Martin, will join Dragons' Den

# Millionaire Scot takes Dragons' Den on to web

HE is a highly successful Scottish entrepreneur who has accrued a fortune of more than £80million and likes to buy a new Aston Martin every year.

Now businessman Shaf Rasul has been unveiled as one of the new faces who will preside over an online version of popular BBC show Dragons' Den.

The 38-year-old, who built up his fortune in property and computers, will offer the chance of up to £50,000 of backing to those who can persuade him their idea is the next big thing.

Members of the public will also get the chance to have their say on video pitches which are posted online before the would-be entrepreneurs face the judgment of the Dragons.

Yesterday the Edinburgh-based entrepreneur said he had been persuaded to take part because of the "innovative" nature of the new online version.

He said: "What is different about this show is the viewer participation angle. The pitches are on the website, so viewers come on and say, I would invest in this or wouldn't invest in that.

"Effectively what you have is the

By **Judith Duffy**

whole of the UK population acting as a Dragon." Mr Rasul, who made it into the top 20 on the UK Asian Rich List last year, revealed he had already made some investments on the show, which begins on March 30.

But he refused to divulge any details, saying only that he and fellow online Dragon Julie Meyer, a website guru, have broken a Dragons' Den record.

Among the pitches available to preview on the website include a bid for £30,000 to fund the "Peepal", a wooden log engraved with the name of a business, such

as a pub, which provides a discreet toilet facility for dogs. Another entrepreneur is asking for £35,000 to back his "Safespring" device, which it is claimed councils will snap up to help solve the problem of gravestones falling over due to wear and tear or vandalism.

Mario Dubois, executive producer of Dragons' Den online, said: "The Dragons' Den Online opportunity is a significant brand extension from TV into the digital arena."

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**'We have everyone in the UK acting as a Dragon'**

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