



## Harunur Rashid Khan Monno

# The visionary behind local ceramics

Monno Ceramics, one of the leading ceramics manufacturing companies in Bangladesh, was established way back in 1985. Since then the best modellers in the industry have worked closely with the institutions to be able to provide consumers with some of the best designs and layout for ceramics.

The institution has a manufacturing capacity of two million pieces per month and a large portion of it is exported to leading destinations like Europe, Australia and USA. Customers worldwide recognise Monno as a well-known company and prestigious department stores around the world stockpile labelled products of the company for sales in foreign countries.

All of these would have been impossible without the vision of one great man, H R Khan Monno. The single initiator, behind a multi-crore business, that has given work opportunities to several thousand over the years.

Harunur Rashid Khan Monno is one of a few names in Southeast Asia who with his intellect and sincere efforts established a company that became famous worldwide. The ingenious man not only pioneered in the ceramic industry, but also made significant contributions in the development sector of his own country. He openly contributes to numerous social development activities including building schools, hospitals, etc. for the community.

Here's a short interview to what lies behind the great man - Harunur Rashid Khan Monno.

### HOW DID YOU VENTURE INTO BUSINESS?

It's a long story and to answer this question I must briefly state everything from the beginning. I was born in 1932 and within a year's time, I lost my father. My mother singlehandedly educated and raised me amongst hard times. Looking at my mother's distress I promised myself that I will make her proud someday.

My strong resolution encouraged me to study hard and join the workforce as soon as possible. While, still a student of Chartered Accountancy, I joined Sir Adamjee Dawood's company in the accounts department.

But, my plans were bigger so I decided to meet with him face to face one day. I asked his secretary for an appointment and with some hard work I was finally able to get a scheduled time from the great man himself.

After a few hours of waiting in the lobby, he finally called me in, to inquire about my reason to meet with him. I was extremely nervous but decided to come forth with the truth. I frankly told him that I wanted to do business.

He was taken aback at first, but instantly took it to his liking that I was frank and transparent about my life goals. He immediately asked his secretary to help me in this regard and hence my life changed and my new life as an entrepreneur began.

My first assignment was to print export register copies for the Adamjee conglomer-



ate company. Within a matter of two years, I saved a significant amount of money and established a press company of my own. I have all the regards to my mentor, the late Adamjee for giving me the opportunity of my lifetime.

### WHAT ENCOURAGED YOU TO GET INTO THE WORLD OF CERAMICS?

While doing business I realised that I always wanted to make something for the masses. And what else could be more lucrative than tableware? During my early days the trend was to shift from using earthenware to ceramics. Owning, high-end tableware was gaining momentum. I thought to myself everyone needs it and so why not make it locally rather than depending on imports to get the same thing.

### IN YOUR EYES HAVE YOU FARED WELL?

By the grace of God, Yes! Today Monno exports to many countries of the world. Our own designs are sold off in foreign countries. We feel extremely proud when foreigners want to collect a design from Bangladesh. Monno even manufactures for reputed foreign brands based on their private designs and labels. We, here at Monno even make the barcodes for some companies.

### WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE MAIN REASON BEHIND THE SUCCESS?

I believe my company has risen only because I believed in hard work, dedication and perseverance. There is no easy way out in any form of work. I also loved gathering knowledge and always talked to friends for better ideas. I believe in investing in research and top-notch technology, employing knowledgeable people wherever necessary.

My belief is that there is no end to learning; every day gives us a new chance to learn something new and utilise this knowledge in a meaningful way that is helpful to everyone.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury  
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