

Bangladesh Ceramics Industry : The Next Manufacturing Success

Bangladesh is a natural choice for ceramic production

In conversation with Md. Shamsul Huda, Managing Director, Great Wall Ceramic Ind. Ltd.

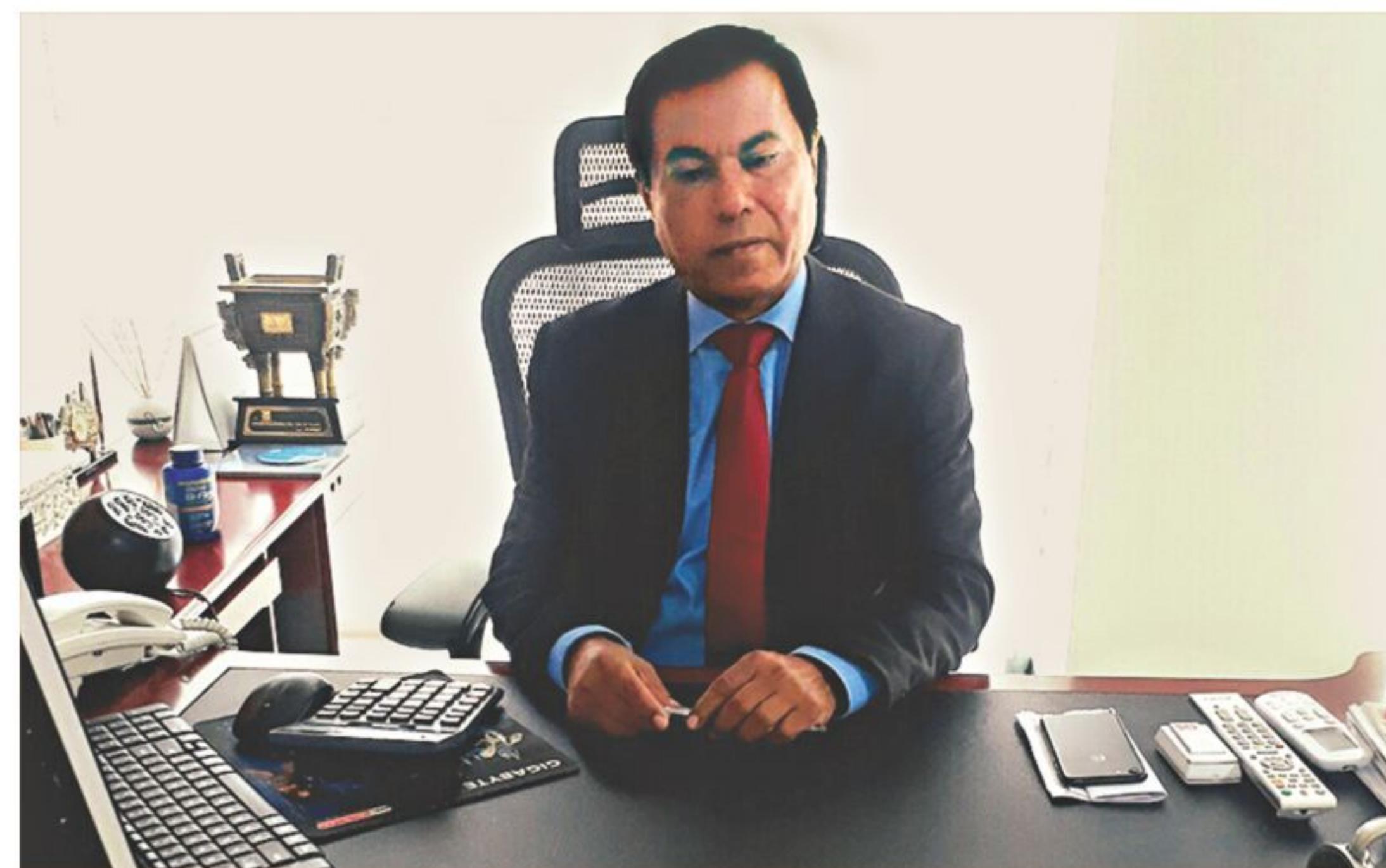
What is the present status of the ceramics industry in Bangladesh?

Bangladesh is a natural choice for ceramic production as it offers every option including a lucrative, expanding domestic market. The ceramics industry is one of the fastest growing, export-oriented sectors in Bangladesh. These industries have been playing a vital role in our economy by earning and saving foreign exchange through export of ceramic goods after meeting the local demand. Almost 80 percent of the total demand of ceramic goods is being met by local industries. Bangladesh currently has 20 tiles-producing factories and the total production capacity is about 120 million square metres per year. However, Bangladesh still imports tiles to meet the market deficit of at least 20 percent. There are huge product varieties in the domestic market (different sizes, designs and colours of tiles according to the customer's taste and demand).

The country's ceramics industry is now in very good condition with the spread of housing business in urban, suburban and remote areas of Bangladesh and having fewer competitors. As the construction industry, including residences, shopping malls, government development infrastructures, etc., is growing so fast, the ceramic tiles business in Bangladesh is also booming. The changing living standards, trends and rising disposable incomes of the growing middle class and 30 million units of housing shortage hold great potential for Bangladesh's tiles industry.

What are the unique aspects of your company?

Our company was established on June 29, 2005 and started commercial production in November 2006. Now the production capacity of our plant is 33,500sqm/per day. Our



MD. SHAMSUL HUDA

company manufactures tiles in a wide range with aesthetically designed quality products at an affordable price. This includes "Great Wall" and "Charu" branded exclusive wall and floor tiles with matching border and decor.

With Great Wall's innovative design, you get the classic detailing and sophisticated look of tiles, along with the durability and easy care of "Great Wall" and "Charu" branded tiles in the domestic market and in South Asia.

The quality of products has helped Bangladesh to carve a niche in the global market; the manufacturers in this sector are taking risks while diversifying their designs and quality at par with world-class standards. Furthermore, the natural gas that is used in the kilns of Bangladesh's ceramic industry does not

contain any sulphur and that is why the country's ceramic products look brighter.

The unique aspect of our company is innovative lucrative design of our products. Digital technology is creating new possibilities for the tiles industry. We are very glad to announce that we are going to manufacture double-charge-vitrified tiles that print the pattern with a double layer of pigment, 3 to 4 mm thicker than other types of tiles. This process does not permit complex patterns but results in a long-wearing tile surface, stain resistant, sturdy and strong, durable and long-lasting compared to low-priced tiles imported from China and other regions of the world. These double-charge-vitrified tiles are maintenance-free, bacteria-free, joint-free, and

there is no major colour variation compared to other tiles. Certainly, it will be a milestone in the history of Bangladesh's ceramic tiles industry. We believe this new product type is the future of the tiles sector in Bangladesh. Besides, we have an efficient and experienced marketing team and after-sales services.

What is your future investment plan?

We are going to make a potential investment in BEZA at Srihatto, Sylhet and BEZA in Mirer Sarai economic zones. This will pave the way for a world-class tiles industry in Bangladesh. Recently we have also signed a contract to increase our daily production by 15,000 sq. ft.

What are the things that need to be improved in the ceramics industry? What kind of support should the government provide to the industry?

The industry suffers from irregular power and gas supply, high tariff on gas, high import duty on certain ceramic raw materials, high VAT of 15 percent on produced goods, double-digit interest rate on loan, double wages rate, poor supply of natural gas, and so on. The government should take note of these issues for the development of the ceramics industry.

Please share your views about the upcoming Ceramics Expo.

This is a great initiative. It will be an evaluation of the progress our local ceramic industry has made over the years. It will definitely strengthen our global position as a ceramic producing country. Our local consumers will also get to know about quality of our products comparing with other global players. It will help them come out of the mentality that only foreign ceramics are good and encourage them to buy local ceramics more.



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