



Currently Shin Trading exports 35 kinds of pet toys such as coco hamster cage and wooden and cotton toys for their customers.

PHOTO: SME FOUNDATION

THE POWER OF SMEs

NILIMA JAHAN

When you think of starting a business in Bangladesh, you almost immediately think of exploring your options in the garments sector. You might even take the risk of venturing into the food business or any other 'tested and tried' sector that is bound to give an instant reward.

51-year-old Mohammad Shahidul Islam Fakir, who hails from Bhaluka Upazila of Mymensingh, however, took the road less travelled. He chose to get involved in a business so

buildings making 35 types of toys for foreign customers.

Shahidul's journey began in 2012 when a Japanese buyer approached him through his younger brother, who lives in Japan. The person gave Shahidul a few products and asked him if he could find these at the Dhaka International Trade Fair. "I searched for these products, not only in the fair, but elsewhere as well. I couldn't find anything similar. That's when it struck me. The raw materials needed to make these toys are available in the country. Why don't I try making these toys on my own?" says Shahidul.

That small gutsy step taken by Shahidul led to the creation of Shin Trading. The products he made were sent to the famous Doggy Man H A Co. Ltd in Japan and they were impressed. Soon after, the company asked Shahidul for 35,000 cotton pet toys worth Tk 9 lakh. They even paid a 50 percent interest. Shahidul completed the rest with the help of a loan.

"I finished the first order with the help of my relatives in around six months. In the beginning, we started with toys such as cotton balls or cotton



Shin Trading started out with only six employees and have grown to employ nearly 300 people now.

PHOTO: SME FOUNDATION

"I searched for these products, not only in the DITE, but elsewhere as well. I couldn't find anything similar. That's when it struck me. The raw materials needed to make these toys are available in the country. Why don't I try making these toys on my own?" says Shahidul.

unique in the country that his closest companions thought that he had lost it. In 2012, Shahidul had decided to make toys for dogs and sell them abroad. Today, Islam has 300 employees working in five tin-shed

stick. Now we produce various items, such as coco hamster cage, wooden dumbbell, catching board, cotton items and much more," says Shahidul. Another positive is that the factory depends mainly upon middle-aged female workers,

Continued to page 5