

#HOA

# In conversation with Tanzila Elma of House of Ahmed

In the new, Kamala-Harris-led world, more and more women from all walks of life are shattering glass ceilings and remodelling themselves to fit their own expectations. One such force to be reckoned with is Tanzila Elma, co-founder of House of Ahmed, a luxury label, entrepreneur and mother of two.

A businesswoman who knows her market, her clients and her products to the T, Tanzila is far from your average success story. Her journey began as a starry-eyed student, harbouring an untapped arsenal of creativity who dared to reach for the skies. Starting out by just designing apparels for her close circle of friends and relatives way back in 2013, House of Ahmed has been developing in baby steps over the years, with Tanzila putting into effect everything she has learned about marketing thus far, and then some.

Breathing life into lessons she learned from a fast-paced corporate job, Tanzila



dreamed bigger. She wanted to highlight Bangladesh; she wanted to affect economic change. She wanted to be an independent entrepreneur.

"I started House of Ahmed to put Bangladesh's name on the map of ethnic fashion. Bengal's artisans are underrated and their work is as good as any South Asian designers revered globally. We are motivated by the honest attempt to showcase the skillset and, quite plainly, the extraordinary magic a Bengali artisan is capable of producing by intertwining ordinary threads," explains Tanzila.

Easier said than done, Tanzila has worked relentlessly to frame her vision into a tangible enterprise. First and foremost, identifying the need for ethnic couture originating from Bangladesh, honing effective communication skills, understanding her customers and then creating an efficient supply chain were all steps that Tanzila effectively climbed as a true entrepreneur. At the top now stands the

glorified Bangladeshi ethnic atelier and a self-sustaining business, the House of Ahmed.

If you think these feats were achieved without pesky challenges, think again. Apart from the unstable waters of the Bangladeshi economy, simply being a woman is hard enough. And being a woman in business, naïve and inexperienced, is the cherry on top of this gender-biased cake.

Crushing the cake like a trailblazer, Tanzila set her own rules. This is where her strong and empathetic personality shined through beautifully.

"It's hard for a woman to be heard; nobody wants to hear what she has to say," states Tanzila. Empowered from within, she then reverts, "But I wasn't going to have any of that. I make sure that people listen to me."

Thinking of entrepreneurship as a means to do something for the community she's a part of, Tanzila is an avid believer of giving back. And this is exactly what defines one of the core beliefs of House of Ahmed.

"We want to help reduce poverty in the lives of Bengal's artisans. We want to uplift them by giving economic value to their skills. The tapestry they can weave, the immaculate designs they can create and the wonder they can strike in the heart of any on-looker deserves appreciation and monetary valuation," argues Tanzila.

This year's International Women's Day may campaign for a changed and alert world with its trending hashtag, #ChooseToChallenge, but Tanzila is focused on a far more personal objective.

"Instead of challenging a norm and rising in protest, I believe in developing my own self, both professionally and personally, and letting my work speak for itself. If I can prove myself and my capabilities, I'll basically be bypassing any norm or limitation thrown my way," she concludes.

**By Ramisa Haque**  
**Photo: House of Ahmed**

**সাদার  
আব এক  
নাম**

**ফাস্ট ওয়াশ**

**Fast wash**  
DETERGENT  
POWDER

**POWER WASH**  
10 minutes

**Multi  
Booster**

**with  
color  
guard**

১০ মিনিটে পাওয়ার ওয়াশিং এর ম্যাজিক

কাপড়ের যে কোন দাগ ময়লাকে নিমিষে দূর করে

কাপড়ের রঙকে রাখে লতনের মতো ককতাকে

**KOHINOOR  
CHEMICAL**