



SM MAHBUBUL ALAM, Managing Director, Walton Hi-Tech Industries PLC



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The Daily Star (TDS): How would you describe your company's current position and market share within the air conditioning industry?

SM Mahbubul Alam (SMMA): Walton Air Conditioner currently holds the leading position in Bangladesh's air conditioning industry, both in residential and commercial segments. We are proud to be the No. 1 brand of choice among Bangladeshi consumers, providing a complete solution in the air conditioner manufacturing industry. Our market share continues to grow rapidly, driven by innovation, energy efficiency, and unmatched after-sales service. Internationally, Walton is the first Bangladeshi brand to manufacture VRF systems, ranking 9th in the world, and we've successfully begun exporting chillers to other countries like Sri Lanka and Singapore. This reflects our growing footprint in the global HVAC market. Walton exports its various products, including residential air conditioners, to more than 50 countries around the world.

TDS: What innovation and technology have you integrated in your products to enhance energy efficiency?

SMMA: Walton has one of the most energetic and youthful Research & Innovation teams in the industry. The continuous efforts of our highly skilled engineers have positioned Walton as a pioneer in the air conditioning industry, not only in Bangladesh but on the global stage.

Walton has developed the most energy-efficient air conditioner in

Bangladesh, certified by BSTI. It has the country's only 6 star rated AC, making it one of the most energy-efficient air conditioners in the world. Our commitment to sustainability is further reflected in the use of environmentally friendly refrigerants like R-32 and R-290. Walton's solar-hybrid inverter ACs run on solar energy during the day and switch to grid power when necessary, significantly cutting down electricity bills and promoting renewable energy use.

The dedicated 'Eco' mode is designed to significantly reduce energy consumption while keeping the indoor temperature comfortable, making it an ideal choice for everyday use. With adjustable output (6,000, 9,000, 12,000, or 18,000 BTU/hr), Walton's convertible models allow users to tailor capacity based on room size, reducing energy waste and improving flexibility.

Through these innovations, Walton ensures efficient, eco-friendly air conditioning suited for modern, energy-conscious consumers.

TDS: How are you addressing changing consumer preferences, particularly regarding smart home integration and user-friendly features?

SMMA: We are well aware that consumers are not just opting for cooling—they're looking for intelligent, connected, and health-conscious solutions that fit effortlessly into modern lifestyles. That's why our air conditioners are developed with a deep focus on smart home integration, ease of use, and

personal comfort, along with modern technologies.

Among Walton air conditioners' cutting-edge features is the IoT-based smart control system, allowing users to operate their AC from anywhere in the world via mobile app. This app also provides real-time electricity consumption data. In addition,

Another industry-first is the introduction of a 6-inch TFT display on the AC unit, allowing users to view real-time and historical data, including energy usage and weather conditions.

To ensure year-round comfort, Walton offers Hot & Cool models, providing warmth in winter and

Walton ACs are designed to withstand extreme temperatures—capable of operating even at 55°C—and function efficiently across a wide voltage range. Aesthetic appeal has also been prioritised, with a variety of sleek and modern designs introduced across several series.

Through relentless innovation and a focus on user-centric features, Walton is transforming the air conditioning landscape in Bangladesh and setting new global benchmarks in technology, sustainability, and performance.

TDS: What steps are you taking to expand your market presence both in urban and emerging rural markets across Bangladesh?

SMMA: Walton always gives priority to meeting consumer preferences. As consumer demands evolve towards intelligent, convenient, and health-oriented products, Walton is proud to lead the transformation with technology that's not just advanced, but genuinely people-first. We have developed various technologies and features to expand our market presence in both domestic and global urban areas—such as smart apps, AI Doctor, offline voice control, and iconic display innovations.

We are working on making air conditioners more affordable and suitable for rural areas. Our ACs can operate across a wide voltage range, making them functional in rural settings. Additionally, we offer solar-hybrid ACs specifically for rural markets.

TOP OFFERS

① **Walton AC customers are enjoying a one-year replacement warranty, up to 12 years' guarantee on the compressor, and a five-year warranty on the PCB. In addition, all Walton AC customers now enjoy a free installation facility.**

② **Under the AC Exchange Offer, customers can buy Walton's new model of air conditioners and receive a 25% discount in exchange for their used ACs of any brand.**

Walton has introduced an "AI Doctor" feature, which automatically detects any malfunction and notifies the Walton service team—enabling proactive servicing even before the customer files a complaint.

In a groundbreaking move, Walton launched the world's first offline voice-controlled AC, supporting both Bengali and English commands.

cooling in summer. Our ACs are also equipped with advanced Nano Health Technologies such as Air Plasma, UV Care, and Ionisers to purify indoor air by eliminating germs and dust particles. Features like Baby Mode for sensitive users, Mould-Proof Technology, and 3-in-1 Convertible Capacity ensure a healthier and more customisable cooling experience.

CHILLING THE HEAT

Inside Bangladesh's Booming AC Market

Beyond homes, ACs are appearing in unexpected places: village mosques, salons, convention centres—even kindergartens. Institutional installations are rising steadily, reflecting widespread adaptation.

FROM PAGE J1

Prices vary widely by brand: one and a half ton inverter or non-inverter units range from 60,000 to 140,000 taka, while one-ton versions are priced between 40,000 and 90,000 taka. Lower-priced models, unsurprisingly, remain top sellers. Many retailers now offer easy instalment payment plans, making ownership even more feasible.

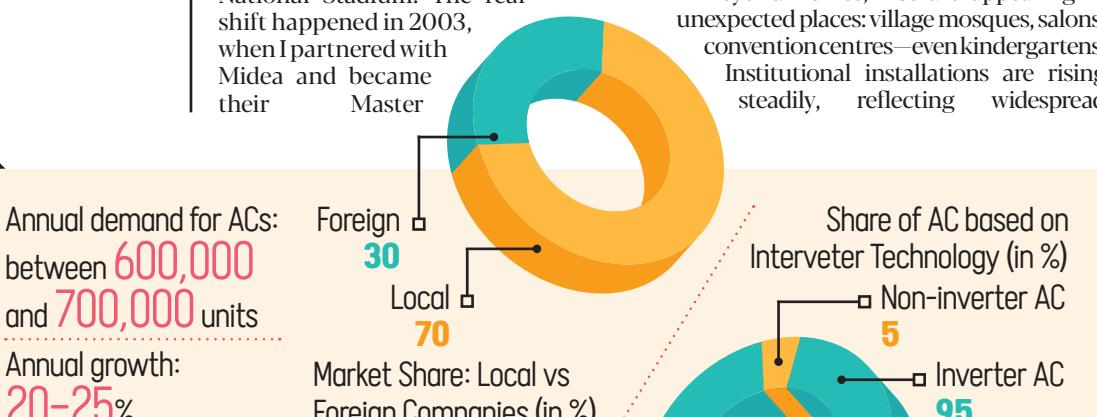
Mohammed Shafiqul Islam, Managing Director of Elite Hitech Industries Ltd, embodies this market transformation. "In 1990, I began by importing air conditioners. By 1996, I had a large showroom at Bangabandhu National Stadium. The real shift happened in 2003, when I partnered with Midea and became their Master

are now preferred by most buyers for their lower electricity bills.

Today's ACs aren't just about cooling. They're smarter, sleeker, and packed with features. "There was a time when people bought ACs just to cool their rooms," says Salim Ullah Salim, Director of Marketing at Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd. "Now they want air purifiers, UV and vitamin C filters, voice control, and smart displays."

Walton even introduced the world's first offline voice-controlled AC that understands both Bengali and English. Their models also feature a 6-inch TFT display showing real-time energy use and weather data.

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Distributor. In 2014, I launched Elite Hitech Industries in Cumilla and began local manufacturing," he recalls. "This reduced our dependency on imports and allowed us to design products tailored for Bangladeshi needs."

Bangladeshi giant Walton is another example of local innovation. "Walton has developed the most energy-efficient air conditioner in Bangladesh, certified by BSTI," says Md. Tanvir Rahman, Chief Business Officer of Walton Air Conditioner. "It is the country's only 6 star rated AC. We also use environmentally friendly refrigerants like R-32 and R-290."

To compete, foreign brands have adapted. Companies like Gree and General, once reliant on imports, now assemble ACs in Bangladeshi warehouses, mirroring local strategies.

The demand is staggering: 600,000 to 700,000 units sold annually, with sales peaking between March and May. Eid seasons also see spikes. Inverter ACs

now make up 95 percent of the market. Despite being pricier, their long-term energy savings have won over consumers.

Prices, however, are climbing. "We assemble locally, but all raw materials are imported," explains Salim. "Rising global prices, a strong US dollar, fuel costs, and transportation charges have all pushed prices up."

Yet Bangladesh is not just consuming—it's exporting. Walton recently signed a five-year global distributorship deal with Singapore-based Flair M&E Pte Ltd. Today, Walton exports to 67 countries, including the US, UK, Australia, Germany, India, and Nigeria.

From luxury to necessity, from import dependency to global export ambitions—Bangladesh's AC market is a story of transformation, resilience, and cool-headed innovation.

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