WE WILL BEGIN EXPORTING Paint from Bangladesh

R. N. PAUL
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The Daily Star (TDS): How would you assess the current state of Bangladesh's paint industry, and what policy or market-level interventions are essential to unlock its next phase of growth?

R. N. Paul (RNP): First of all, paint serves two major purposes—domestic and industrial. I would say that the demand for paint existed in the past, still exists, and will continue to exist in the future. Domestic usage, in particular, is not affected by political situations. If someone constructs a new building, it must be painted. If the real estate sector slows, consumption might decline slightly, but the underlying requirement for paint will persist.

Secondly, from a financial perspective—Bangladesh's economic reform is indeed progressing; it is not regressing.

There was a time when automobiles were imported fully assembled. Now, we are manufacturing many of their components—including the bodies—here in Bangladesh. Two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and various other vehicles are now being produced locally, and their bodies require painting. Industrial demand for paint is gradually increasing. Moreover, Bangladesh is steadily advancing towards industrialisation.

Previously, we imported finished products in their entirety. Then, we began importing some components and manufacturing others locally. Especially in the automobile sector, the industrial requirement for paint has grown significantly—and this trend is expected to continue. Our goal now is to establish a fully integrated manufacturing process in Bangladesh, excluding some electronic components. Once this is achieved, demand for industrial paint will rise further.

Now, let's talk about marine paint. Ships are now being built in Bangladesh, and some of us are already involved in painting them. In some cases, we collaborate with foreign partners. We are actively pursuing partnerships with globally renowned companies that manufacture marine paint for ocean-going vessels. For instance, Rainbow Paint is preparing to begin joint manufacturing with a well-reputed international company to produce marine paint in Bangladesh.

Industrial paint is already a well-developed segment. One major area within this segment is powder coating—both liquid and powder-based—and the demand for these is high and steadily growing in Bangladesh. The strength of Rainbow Paint lies in its broad capacity across multiple segments: industrial powder, liquid coatings, automotive paint, as well as domestic paint. We are equipped to meet the needs of all types of industries. Looking ahead, we are hopeful that we will begin exporting paint from Bangladesh.

TDS: How is your company responding to the growing demand for personalised and aesthetic paint solutions?

RNP: We have introduced some specialised interior paints that are more sophisticated and require skilled workers for proper application. Only those with adequate expertise can handle such finishes. Some of the more established companies in the market already have trained professionals for this type of work, and we are also in the process of building our own skilled workforce.

Developing this skill base takes time, but we are making consistent efforts. We aim to offer a full range of variants in interior paints. Several products have already been launched, and more are in the pipeline.

TDS: How do you balance affordability and quality for different market segments?

RNP: When we first entered the market, we imported raw materials and conducted the blending ourselves. Now, we produce many of the raw materials in-house. This represents significant progress and has allowed us to better manage our costs. For example, when we imported pre-packaged materials, we had to factor in a 10% margin. By manufacturing locally, we save that 10%. We do not need to make that additional margin—instead, we can offer our products at more competitive prices while maintaining quality.

We've recently initiated a new process involving backward linkage. Previously, we imported alkyd resin in its processed form, which increased our costs by around 10%. Now, instead of importing the finished resin, we import its raw materials and produce the resin ourselves.

For us, the first priority is price affordability. Next comes value for money—we aim to offer the best possible quality that the customer can afford.

TDS: What key innovations is your company prioritising to maintain a competitive edge in the rapidly evolving paint and home improvement sector?

RNP: From the very beginning of our paint production, we installed an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP), because paint is a chemical product and the production process generates waste, including water and chemical by-products. That is why we prioritised establishing an ETP from the outset.

Unlike many companies that discharge treated water into rivers, we do not. Instead, we reuse the treated water. We adhere to a strict zero-discharge policy—nothing from our factory is released into rivers or the external environment.

Moreover, we avoid using chemicals in our paints that are harmful to the environment. Most of the ingredients we use are globally recognised and eco-friendly. The strong chemical odour often associated with painting—we are actively working to reduce that. We are incorporating fragrance, making our paints odour-free, and minimising the use of chemicals that trigger harmful reactions. We are also transitioning to lead-free formulations.

At the end of the day, we are citizens of this country—and we must protect it. It is our responsibility to ensure a safe and sustainable environment for future generations.

WHY CHOOSE RAINBOW PAINTS?

1. Superior adhesion, UV resistance, weather resistance, corrosion resistance, and long-lasting performance
2. Smooth, elegant finish with easy cleaning and high coverage
3. Environmentally responsible: hazard-free, lead-free, and VOC-free
4. Effective waterproofing and resistance to efflorescence
5. Odour-free and safe for sensitive indoor environments

MORE THAN COLOUR

How to choose paint that fits your life

AYMAN ANIKA

In Dhaka's ever-expanding skyline, where apartments compete for light, heat, and breath, paint is not just the final touch – it's the invisible layer that makes a house livable. However, we don't talk about it enough. We obsess over floor tiles and kitchen backsplashes but settle for "off-white" on every wall. Yet paint touches everything. It colours our moods. It shapes our air. It either soothes us or suffocates us.

The mistake most people make is thinking paint is just colour. It's not. As Gazi Md. Saiful Alam, Brand Executive at Dulux Paints Bangladesh, puts it, "Paint today is more than just colour; in reality, it's chemistry. The kind you choose isn't just about the finish. It's about fit."

Hence, understanding the role of paint, room by room, can make all the difference in creating a home that's not just stylish but healthy, functional, and expressive.

When colour has to care

Children's bedrooms are often painted with pastel optimism, chosen more for aesthetics than function. Yet this is the one room where paint does more than beautify – it protects.

Alam advises parents to opt for water-based acrylic emulsions, which are breathable, low in odour, and safe for sensitive users. "They're often preferred in bedrooms, living rooms, and children's spaces where comfort and safety matter most," he says.

Soft greens, light blues, and dusty pinks offer a comforting palette while calming the nervous system. Nadia Rahman, who frequently designs nurseries and kid-friendly spaces, notes, "Comfort has a colour language. And it can be both soothing and imaginative when used intentionally."

Rajesh Sircar, General Manager of Nippon Paint Bangladesh, adds that modern concerns have shifted toward wellbeing. "Our Spotless Plus range includes antiviral and antibacterial properties that address the need for healthier indoor air quality, especially in spaces used by children," he explains.

The teenage room: Where mood meets paint

Teenagers often want black walls and dramatic colours. While many parents hesitate, design experts say it's about finding a balance and controlled expression.

Dark greens, deep blues, and clay-inspired earth tones often strike the right balance between personality and longevity. Alam advises testing such tones under natural daylight, as Bangladesh's overcast monsoon light can dramatically alter how paint appears indoors.

Shayaan Seraj, Director of Aqua Paints, notes that their InstaColor system and AI-based shade recommendations help teenagers and homeowners alike visualise colours in their actual environment. "We're empowering homeowners with tools that make colour personal. Whether it's a soft grey for sophistication or a rich maroon for drama, the idea is to help people connect with their space," he says.

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