

# EMPOWERING HOMEOWNERS

## with Tools that Make Colour Personal

**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?

**Shayaan Seraj (SS):** Bangladesh's paint market is valued at over BDT 6,000 crore, led by Berger (65%),

Middle East, and Africa if duty structures allow.

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

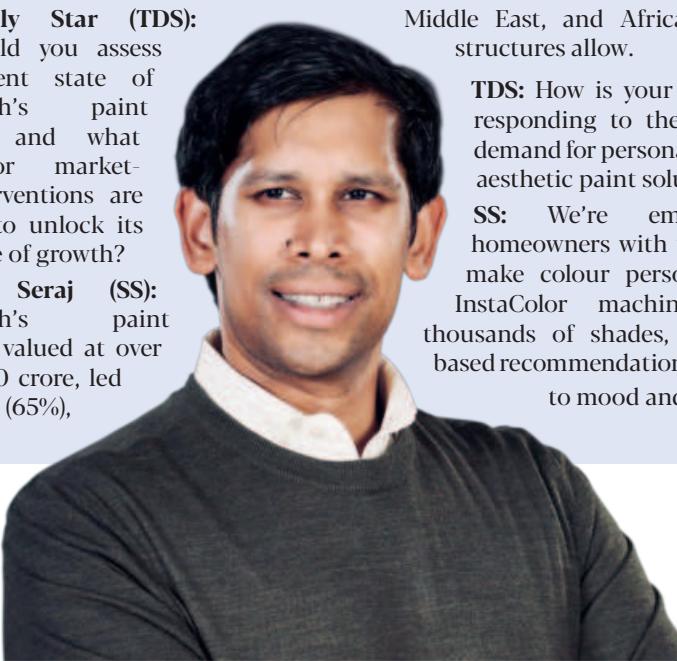
**SS:** We're empowering homeowners with tools that make colour personal. Our

InstaColor machines offer thousands of shades, with AI-based recommendations tailored to mood and lighting.

from 8 to 16 taka. We see demand across the spectrum, and we've built a portfolio that offers quality at every price point—from entry-level economy paints to ultra-premium emulsions.

What matters is reliability. Whether applied in a city apartment or a coastal home, our paints are made to perform and endure.

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



### SHAYAAN SERAJ

Director of Aqua Paints, Octagon Fibres & Chemicals, a unit of Elite Group

Asian Paints (15%), Nippon and Nerolac (5% each), and others including Aqua Paints at around 2%.

Despite growing urbanisation and housing demand, per capita paint use remains just 1.2 to 1.5 kg—far below India's 4.2 kg or the global average of 15 kg.

The World Bank's GDP growth forecast signals a positive outlook for construction and renovation activity. For local manufacturers, real growth will come from policy reform. Aqua Paints, through Aqua Resins and Emulsions, produces high grade binders that can support exports to South Asia, the

We also provide on-site sampling, 2D/3D visual mock-ups, and textured finishes such as fairface or exposed brick to support modern interior trends.

Our aim is to help customers express identity through colour—whether it's sophistication in grey, serenity in the many shades of white, or warmth in rustic tones.

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

**SS:** Our products range from 6 to 24 taka per square foot, while labour costs vary

**SS:** We're advancing eco-conscious options like low-VOC paints, anti-saline coatings for coastal zones, and elastomeric roof compounds that reflect heat and resist monsoons. To elevate the customer experience, we envision using Oakley smart glasses and Oculus headsets for immersive pre-paint simulations.

Internationally, we are pursuing certification through Malaysia's SIRIM QAS and collaborating with experts such as Professor Ian Hamilton of UCL to align paint performance with sustainable building design.

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### WHY CHOOSE AQUA PAINTS?

- 1. InstaColor Tinting -** Thousands of colours instantly available, with AI-powered shade recommendations.
- 2. High-Emulsion Primers & Sealers -** Enhanced surface bonding and protection, particularly effective in humid regions.
- 3. Eco-Friendly Formulations**

- Low-VOC paints made with safer materials, supporting greener buildings.

**4. Durability by Design -** Lifespan of 5-10 years, depending on application and surface condition.

**5. Specialised Coatings -** Includes anti-saline solutions, elastomeric roof paints, textured decorative finishes, and thermoplastic hot-melt road markings.

"Driven by rapid urbanisation and a growing appetite for global design, homeowners are moving away from functional painting toward thoughtful expression," said Syed Salahuddin Abu Naser, Business Director of Dulux Paints Bangladesh, ACI Formulations Limited. "Today's question isn't just 'what colour to use'—it's 'what feeling should this wall evoke?'"

#### Getting expert help without breaking the bank

A growing number of consumers are turning to professionals or digital tools to help choose colours and finishes.

Berger Paints' Experience Zone (BEZ), currently operating in 17 locations with plans to expand nationwide, serves as a one-stop hub for expert guidance. "These centres offer a unified platform for colour advice, surface evaluation, and access to our Express Painting Service," said Md Mohsin Habib Chowdhury. "From shade selection to surface preparation and professional application, we ensure a cleaner, faster, and higher-quality finish," he added.

Asian Paints, too, offers end-to-end solutions. "Through initiatives like Beautiful Homes and ColourNext, we provide end-to-end solutions from selection to execution, helping customers visualise and realise their dream spaces," said Budhaditya Mukherjee of Asian Paints.

And these services aren't reserved only for the wealthy.

"Though they may seem like a luxury, many are free or come at a nominal cost with paint purchases, ensuring even budget-conscious customers benefit," added Md Mohsin.

Digital tools are also transforming the consumer experience. The Dulux Visualizer App, a global benchmark in AR-based colour previewing, is being assessed for a local rollout—customised for Bangladeshi homes, habits, and hardware. Similarly, Nippon Paint's i-Colour App allows users to digitally preview colours on their own walls, making the selection process more personal and confident.

With increasing access to digital tools, professional services, and diverse product lines, homeowners no longer have to compromise. In a world where every colour tells a story, your walls deserve the right voice—one that speaks to your lifestyle, lasts through the seasons, and stays within your means.

## Choosing the Right Paint for Your Budget and Style

**But affordability doesn't always mean going cheap. A common mistake is choosing the lowest-priced option without considering long-term costs," said one industry expert. "A basic paint may need reapplication in two years, while a premium coat could last five or more."**

### SAHIBULLAH AFSARI

Painting one's home is no longer just about freshening up walls. In today's world—where a vibrant cultural legacy intersects with modern living—choosing paint has evolved into a personal, emotional, and financial decision. Whether it's a modest flat in Dhaka or a family home in the countryside, homeowners are increasingly weighing budget constraints against aesthetic ambitions to make smarter, longer-lasting choices.

#### Budget first, brand later

The cost of painting a home varies widely, depending on paint type, surface area, and labour charges. For many middle-income families, setting a budget is the starting point. Responding to this reality, brands like Berger, Aqua, Asian Paints, Aqua Paints, Nippon, and Roxy have developed tiered product portfolios, ranging from economy options to premium finishes—ensuring homeowners can find solutions that match both their tastes and their means.

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without considering long-term costs," said one industry expert. "A basic paint may need reapplication in two years, while a premium coat could last five or more."

Md Mohsin Habib Chowdhury, COO & Director of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited, emphasised the importance of innovation in keeping quality affordable. "Maintaining affordability amid rising input costs requires operational discipline and innovation across the value chain. Our goal is to make quality paint accessible to every homeowner, reinforcing our commitment to dependable, high-performance solutions that enhance living spaces across all income levels," he said.

Budhaditya Mukherjee, Regional Head of Asian Paints International Limited, echoed the sentiment: "We maintain a tiered product portfolio that caters to diverse income groups. From economy emulsions to premium finishes, we ensure that quality is never compromised. This approach allows homeowners across the spectrum to access durable, aesthetically pleasing solutions that fit their budgets."

Rajesh Sircar, General Manager of Nippon Paint Bangladesh, added that

the company's wide range addresses everyone from price-sensitive buyers to those seeking high-end finishes. "We offer a broad portfolio catering to every budget—value-for-money options to premium solutions," he noted.

Shayaan Seraj, Director of Aqua Paints (Octagon Fibres & Chemicals, a unit of Elite Group), added practical numbers. He said, "Our products range from Tk 6 to Tk 24 per square foot, while labour costs vary from Tk 8 to Tk 16. We've built a portfolio that offers quality at every price point."

#### Understanding paint types and their purpose

In a country where humidity, salinity, and seasonal extremes affect wall health, choosing the right paint type is crucial. Emulsion paints are widely recommended for their durability and smooth finish—ideal for living rooms and bedrooms. However, they're pricier than distempers, which remain a cost-effective option for low-traffic areas.

To meet diverse needs, paint companies now offer specialised solutions—from anti-saline coatings for coastal areas and low-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints for eco-conscious consumers, to elastomeric

room of paints that reflect heat and resist monsoon wear.

"What matters is reliability," said Shayaan Seraj. "Whether it's a city apartment or a coastal home, paints should be made to perform and endure."

Weather-resistant acrylics, though costlier, are the go-to for exterior walls due to their longevity and ability to resist fungal growth. For interiors, low-VOC or odourless paints are gaining popularity—especially among families with children or elderly members—for their health benefits.

#### The psychology of colour meets personal taste

Paint is also an emotional choice. Colour can define a room's mood and a homeowner's personality. While practical concerns like durability and maintenance play a role, personal expression has become a central theme.

