

'High time now we recognize Recycling is Essential'

Muzammil Haji Amin was born and grew up in the Gujarati town of Dhoraji. He joined the family textile firm in Surat, together with his father and elder brother Ehsan Haji Amin. He immediately became a key member of their management team, and he transitioned their firm from textile to recycling in 1991, becoming innovative and expanding through imports and exports. Later, in 1995, with the support of his family, he entered into a worldwide joint business venture, and in 2002, he built an office in Sharjah under the name ALA International LLC. This was the beginning of the ALA Group.

As the creator of the ALA Group of Companies, he grew the company at every turn by promoting his ideology and vision, with the help of his younger brother Sahim Haji Amin and the next generation of family members. He had a staff of 25 employees when he initially opened his headquarters in Dubai. His amazing achievement exemplifies how recycling may assist to develop and preserve industry jobs. The group has now extended the recycling factory with its office headquarters in the Jebel Ali free zone by owning the office as of 2020.

He has also received various accolades in the recycling business, including Best Recycler Award, Businessman of the Year, Most Innovative



“Post-pandemic situation has become favourable since the vaccination campaign is robust across the world, and most of the industry is slowly and gradually recovering. We are witnessing a surge in demand for electric cars, there is a definite requirement for scrap metals and recycled plastics for a cleaner future. I see a clear and an increased need for the recycling in the future years.”

Muzammil Haji Amin
President
ALA Group, Dubai – UAE

Personality, and so on.

In this interview with **Pareesh Parmar**, Amin highlights the post-pandemic outlook and the challenges affecting the metal scrap recycling business.

What were the recycling industry's major challenges?

What steps did your company take to deal with the situation?

The COVID-19 pandemic shocked the global economy and brought in dramatic changes in the year 2020. After reaching a record low in the second quarter, economic activity gradually began to improve, but the long-term consequences remain. COVID-19 affected worldwide economy, forcing companies to close temporarily or permanently in some situations. The interruption impacted the whole supply

chain, bringing everything to a halt from factories to ports.

During the pandemic, ALA Group faced a few problems, including contract execution, since services such as shipping, transportation, banking, and courier businesses were temporarily hampered or disrupted, but they were resolved over time and with the help of our staff. We were able to overcome this by making most of our job virtual, which has now become the accepted norm. We learnt a lot during those times, but digitalization has made it possible for us to operate effortlessly from anywhere in the globe, whether it was for meetings or any other information update.

Pandemic caused non-ferrous and ferrous commodity prices to spiral. Has China been able to

control the prices by releasing its commodities reserve?

China dictates the metals market, whether in terms of demand or production. The recent recovery in global economic activity following the pandemic, as well as the massive stimulus packages in the US, supply concerns from mining companies such as Chile (mines were closed), and the rising demand for electric vehicles have all contributed to increased demand for all metals, particularly for the industrial metal copper.

China has intensified its drive to control commodity prices and limit speculation in order to mitigate the possibility of a pandemic comeback from rising raw material costs.

China released state stockpiles of metals such as copper, aluminium, and zinc, and the metals that will be sold in batches to fabricators and manufacturers, and most metal prices fell after the announcement, for example, copper, which was hovering above \$10,000 in May 2021, plummets to \$9667 at the LME in June 2021, and we can say that it has resulted in a short-term cooling of metal prices, according to the market.

It may provide short-term price control, but it will have the least long-term impact on metal prices.

How has India's lockdown affected the recycling sector, and how has it affected your company?

Many businesses in India have been thrown into disarray as a result of the pandemic, including the recycling industry. I believe the whole industry came to a halt, but as we have seen throughout the years, the country has always emerged triumphant in all of its terrible times, and the same is true

during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, the administration launched several steps to address the issues of the recycling sector, particularly logistics affecting shipping and ports.

For ALA Group, we learnt to adapt to the adjustments that were required of us, reaching out to our employees and staff to help them during the crisis. The necessity for technology and digitization to reach our consumers and clients in a secure environment. The pandemic was a total eye-opener, and it essentially brought the world closer .

What was the evolution of the ALA Group during the Pandemic, and what is your post-pandemic outlook?

For the past 30 years, ALA Group has been in the recycling business. We have a presence not just in India, but also in the Middle East, China, and the United States. We branched out into diverse metal recycling and, over the past three years, plastic recycling as well. Of sure, the pandemic has made us more adaptable and supportive of one another in times of distress. As a recycling business, we are always developing and learning, and the use of technology and the internet throughout the pandemic kept us linked with our stakeholders.

The post-pandemic situation is promising, since a global vaccination campaign is underway. And the majority of the sector is slowly but gradually improving.

For a cleaner future, there is a direct need for scrap metals and recycled plastics. As you can see, demand for electric cars is increasing. In the next few years, I anticipate a clear and good need for the recycling business.

How important is it to consider scarp recycling under 'Essential Commodities'?

Recycling is essential and it is high time recycling operations should be recognized as essential businesses as it supplies important raw materials to run the manufacturing industry. Even during the pandemic recycled metal, paper, plastics, and other commodity-grade materials helped in running the economy and it is an integral part to the manufacturing supply chain.

In the current situation, how does the ALA Group contribute to sustainability?

The recycling business defines sustainability as the 3Rs: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. With its strong presence in the recycling sector, the ALA group has become synonymous with the industry. When transporting recycled goods, whether metals or plastics, we rigorously adhere to the laws of the land. We employ best practises to ensure the long-term viability of the whole value chain. All ferrous and nonferrous polymers are obtained, processed, sorted, and recycled in an environmentally responsible manner. The recycling sector saves natural resources, helps the economy, and generates employment, all while helping to preserve the environment.

And, as a founding member and Secretary-General of the Bureau of Middle East Recycling Association, we bring together the recycling sector to debate on various industry-related subjects and raise awareness through its International Conferences. This year, too, we will conducting the BMR 9th international recycling conference in Dubai on November 14th and 15th, in accordance with Dubai government rules.