



Mr Iqbal Ahmed OBE

Place of Residence: **Manchester**

Sector: **Business**

Iqbal Ahmed was born in Sylhet, Bangladesh in 1956 and came to the UK in 1971. He completed his secondary education at the City College in Westminster, London and joined the family business in Oldham in 1976. Subsequently, his brothers, Kamal and Bilal joined him and the expansion of the business began.

Iqbal is married with three children, two of whom have left university to make their way in the world, one with Seamark, the other a doctor, and the third has begun her degree course at Manchester University.

He pioneered the import of frozen fish and seafood products in refrigerated containers and was the first to import the black tiger shrimp into the UK and EU.

Iqbal Brothers & Company soon became the leading supplier of warm water frozen fish and shrimps in the EU with a national distribution network it retains to this day.

Seamark plc followed in 1991, specializing in the processing and stocking of warm water shrimps, especially the black tiger and the fresh water king prawn. After processing and packing, these were exported to most countries in Europe, as a result of which, Seamark received the coveted Queen's Award for Export Achievement in 1998. This was followed in 1999, by the first prize in the prestigious Business in Europe Awards.

In Bangladesh Seamark received a national award and gold medal from the Bangladesh Government

consecutively for the years 2001, 2002, 2003, for the highest export of seafood.

As a British investor in the third world, with the support and encouragement of DTI, a new, ultra modern factory, costing USD10 million, was constructed in Chittagong, Bangladesh. HRH The Princess Royal was invited to perform the official opening in November 2000, which he did in the presence of many distinguished guests. In addition, two further seafood processing companies have been taken over in Bangladesh.

In 2001, they opened their USA sales office in New Jersey and have since acquired a warehouse and a cold store in Brooklyn, New York to distribute our products in North America including Canada.

In 2005, Seamark constructed a further Manchester factory on a 6.25-acre on a nearby site in East Manchester. A further development to this site involves a large Thai restaurant called Vermilion, which opened in November 2007. Vermilion features an exceptional décor and the site include a 200 cover restaurant on its first floor and a bar with a capacity of 300 and a large private function room for over 100 people on its second floor. All three units have bars and kitchens and are capable of handling large and small vents, weddings, business conferences and the like.

Over the years, Iqbal has been appointed to a number of Government committees and Advisory bodies, among which are

the Southern Asia Advisory Group under DTI, the Competitiveness Council, BOND (the British Council) and the Manchester Forum. He is the Director of New East Manchester Limited, the partnership company between Manchester City Council, English Partnerships and North West Development Agency charged with the task of the regeneration East Manchester. In 2006 he was invited to become a member of the Ethical Trading Champions' Group, set up under the government's Food Industry Sustainability Strategy (FISS). Iqbal represents the interests and concerns of the Frozen Food Manufacturers. The British Frozen Food Federation nominated him for the position on the Champions' Group and they submitted their report and recommendations to the government at the end of March 2007. He is also the Northwest Regional President of the Bangladesh British Chamber of Commerce.

In November 2007, he was personally invited by George Osborn; Shadow Chancellor to join his newly formed New Enterprise Council.

He is also involved in many charities in the UK and in Bangladesh, including the development of a secondary school and college (Burunga Iqbal Ahmed High School and College) for 1,200 pupils in Sylhet in Northeast Bangladesh. He is Founder and Vice-Chairman of Masjid-ul-aqsa Islamic Centre.

Hobbies include traveling, watching documentary programme, going to cinema, playing golf, tennis and swimming.