



ON THE SPOT... SC Bansal

SC Bansal is President of the All India Glass Manufacturers' Federation (AIGMF) New Delhi and Director of Adarsh Kanch Udyog, Firozabad.

GW: What does it mean to you to be President of the AIGMF?

It is a great honour for me. I represent the small-scale sector of the glass industry in Firozabad and have worked my way up. In 1967, I was a small factory owner and today, Adarsh Kanch Udyog group has a capacity of about 300 tonnes/day. As a manufacturer of lead glass tubing, as well as tube light and glass bulb shells etc, we hold a dominant position and employ about 10,000 people.

GW: How long will you serve as President of the AIGMF?

I have been an office bearer of the AIGMF since September 2003, when I was elected Honorary Treasurer. Moving up the ladder, I was made Senior Vice President in September 2010 and President in September 2012. I am likely to continue as President until September 2014.

GW: What do you hope to achieve during your presidency?

We are attempting an enhancement of membership particularly from Firozabad, which is a hub of the local glass industry and is recognised as the glass city of India. Many glass manufacturers in Firozabad are not yet members so I am trying to rope them in, since the federation gives a platform to work with the changes currently encountered.

GW: What other current priorities does the AIGMF have?

Collectively, we are attempting to solve problems for all sectors of the Indian glass industry, including

those relating to the high cost of soda ash and energy. For example, we filed a petition against the levy of an anti-dumping duty on soda ash that was imposed by the government two years ago. The umbrella of the AIGMF brings glass professionals together to discuss the industry's problems and then the federation takes up these challenges with the authorities concerned. The AIGMF is also trying to educate architects, builders and consumers to use the correct type of glass in buildings.

Continuing upgrades of *Kanch* magazine is also high on our agenda. Our exclusive co-operation with *Glass Worldwide* makes our organisation richer. The quality of *Glass Worldwide* is highly appreciated by members. Our joint collaboration is certainly very useful and benefits both parties.

GW: In general, how healthy is the Indian glass industry?

It's in sound health, having fared reasonably well during the global economic crisis. During 2013, smaller manufacturers in Firozabad have managed to sustain themselves but the larger sector is facing significant setbacks. For many units, particularly those in the large-scale segment of the industry who added more tonnage to production capacities during the industrial boom of 2009-2011, the market has seen a downward trend and larger businesses have not been able to utilise their capacities fully. Consequently, these units have not been able to utilise their installed capacities fully.

GW: What other challenges does the industry face?

Competition to glass comes from



SC Bansal (left) at the opening ceremony for GLASSPEX India 2013 in Mumbai.

substitute forms of packaging like plastic and tin and also from the reuse of glass containers. In Western countries, second-hand bottles are seldom used – they are broken and recycled. In India, we have junk sellers who collect these bottles for a minor price from end users and significant quantities of these products are reused in the local market, if not through the organised sector then by other means. Certain types of glass such as liquor bottles, for example, feature special designs and cannot be cleaned properly. Consequently, it is an unhygienic practice and should be not be permitted by the government. The AIGMF has taken up the matter with the authorities concerned.

GW: How well is glass competing against competitive materials?

Unfortunately, there is inadequate public debate about the detrimental effects of plastic in comparison to glass. Consciousness is growing but at a slow rate and so plastic continues to be popular. Education of the rural population is particularly inadequate, although we believe that our efforts will improve the situation in the future.

The Indian government has constituted an expert panel to examine if plastic and PET bottles used for packaging pharmaceutical products are safe. The AIGMF is giving all necessary assistance and support to this panel.

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GW: What are the long-term prospects for the Indian glass industry?

The glass industry's success is linked to population, which in India is increasing. Naturally, therefore, glass demand in all sectors can be expected to increase. Hopefully, the Indian economy will soon realise a faster growth track. This will help all industries, including glass to grow faster.

GW: Does the AIGMF co-operate with glass federations from other regions with common goals?

We joined an international meeting of glass trade associations during glasstec 2012 and aim to learn from other federations. Sometimes, there are major priority differences to address. For example, we have no recycling bottle banks in India like Europe, North America and elsewhere. We want to halt the reuse of bottles in India but stopping this practise is not popular in some other countries. The efforts of other federations with common goals are acknowledged and appreciated but there are many cultural differences and our priority is to focus on domestic needs.

GW: Can suppliers contribute to the efforts of the AIGMF?

We have two categories of membership – manufacturers of all types of glass (containers, flat, solar, tableware and kitchenware, crystal etc) and those connected with the industry such as suppliers of machinery and raw materials. Suppliers have the advantage of meeting and developing contacts with key industry representatives at our meetings, as glassmakers also have the advantage of interacting with those who can supply quality machinery and other products.

GW: How important are the GLASSPEX India exhibitions that incorporate the AIGMF's international conferences?

The AIGMF first staged an exhibition in 1986 and has assisted in the creation of events in alternate years since 1995. During this time, India has embraced the technology revolution and the events have helped visitors to discover the latest available technologies. In addition to me, numerous other companies from Firozabad visited GLASSPEX India 2013 in Mumbai and many exhibitors will follow up with visits to Firozabad. We are happy that Messe Düsseldorf organises GLASSPEX India and as the market size increases further, the event can become increasingly productive and informative. ■



SC Bansal (third from left) with AIGMF colleagues Monohar Lal and Pradeep Gupta and Glass Worldwide's Dave Fordham.

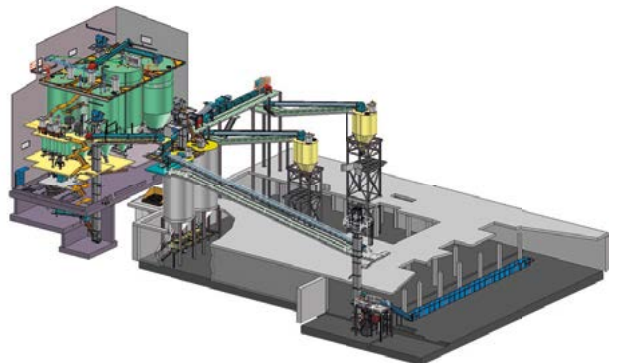


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