

Creating a float glass success story in India

Subhash Tyagi is Chairman and Managing Director of float glass producer, Gold Plus Glass Industry Ltd of Delhi and Chairman of the Architectural Glass Panel at the All India Glass Manufacturers' Federation. Mr Tyagi spoke about his company's rise to prominence and recent trends in the Indian flat glass industry. John Wallis reports.

Born and raised in the village of Muzafarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, Subhash Tyagi is among the latest group of Indian entrepreneurs to create successful family enterprises in the world of glass manufacture. Together with his brother Suresh, he runs Gold Plus Glass Industry Ltd, a company that traces its roots back to 1985, when the original business (Jimmy Sales and Research) started to trade in various types of glass.

Today, Gold Plus Glass is described as the first 100% Indian-owned company to manufacture float glass, with a dedicated 470 tonnes/day production facility at Roorkee, Uttarakhand. In addition, specialist flat glass processing facilities are operated at Sonipat (Haryana) and Kala Amb (Himachal Pradesh).

Subhash Tyagi is the company's Chairman and Managing Director, while Suresh is Executive Director, with responsibility for production. They have worked together from the outset and have developed an effective

management style. According to Mr Tyagi, as well as his brother, David Rose and Alok Modi of Gujarat Guardian Ltd have particularly influenced his glass industry career. "Their management system has been very effective and has always inspired me." In addition, at home, his wife Shashi provides valuable support. "Family is a permanent support that you can always rely upon and with a growing company, you need that" he confirms. His son, Jimmy Tyagi, is Executive Director of the company and has also recently been appointed Vice President of the Northern India Glass Manufacturers' Association, one of the regional associations of the AIGMF.

PRODUCTION CAPABILITIES

Having traded glass since 1985, Gold Plus Glass Industry Ltd started to process automotive and architectural glass in 1996, before becoming a float producer in 2009. Today, the company manufactures between 15% and 17% of all clear float glass currently made in India. Clear, mirrored, frosted and on-line reflective substrates are offered.

For architectural customers, Gold Plus manufactures toughened, bent-toughened, heat strengthened, bent, ceramic fritted and heat-soaked glasses, as well as laminated, acoustic, burglar-resistant, bullet-resistant and insulating products. And for the automotive sector, the company produces windscreens, side- and backlites, predominantly for the local replacement market. Most output is sold to domestic customers, with small quantities exported to neighbouring Nepal and Bangladesh.

A multi-national cross-section of leading suppliers were involved in the design and construction of the float line, including Fives Stein, Grenzebach Maschinenbau, ISRA Surface Vision, Lahti Precision and Youhua. In terms

of processing equipment, CNC cutting lines were sourced from LiSEC and Technometal, while grinding and polishing machines came from Glaston (Bavelloni) and Schiatti Angelo, with washing machines from Bassara Machine Tools and insulated glazing lines from LiSEC and Ekang of South Korea. Glaston (Tamglass), South Glass Technology and Landglass Technology (both Chinese) have delivered horizontal toughening and bending furnaces and a Bimatech work station is responsible for the creation of holes and cut-outs.

Chinese equipment is much in evidence throughout. In addition to the items listed above, this includes double edgers (Shunde Golive Glass Machinery), water jet cutting equipment (Dardi International), a lamination line (Ivaco), autoclave (Golden Ring) and automatic sandblasting machinery. A heat soak oven was developed in-house.

Because India is a fast growing market, Subhash Tyagi believes it presents important opportunities for international suppliers. "Along with glass manufacturers, suppliers should focus on R&D and ensure best value engineering, not only for their machines but also for the finished product. They also need to focus more on local service and spare parts availability."

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Despite the current economic slowdown, the local glass industry has changed dramatically within the past two decades. "When we entered the business in 1985, glass was used in a very minimalistic way" Mr Tyagi recalls. "We were among the country's first glass processors when we built our first unit in 1996. Before this time, nobody in India used insulated glazing but today, there are just under 100 processors throughout the country."



Subhash Tyagi is Chairman and Managing Director of float glass producer, Gold Plus Glass Industry Ltd.



Jimmy, Subhash and Suresh Tyagi are all involved in the day-to-day running of Gold Plus Glass.



A dedicated 470 tonnes/day float glass production facility is operated at Roorkee, Uttarakhand.

According to the Gold Plus Glass founder, the Indian flat glass industry is still very much in its infancy, with considerable potential still to be explored. "The major growth in terms of volume and value addition will come from the construction sector, mainly in the form of energy-efficient and safety glasses. In terms of geographical coverage, we are hopeful that demand will multiply once it takes off in smaller cities and towns throughout India."

ONE AMONG EQUALS

Subhash Tyagi took over as Chairman of the Architectural Glass Panel at the All India Glass Manufacturers' Federation in March 2013 and completes his 12 months' tenure of office this March. "The Chairman is one among equals" he explains, "where all decisions are taken with the full participation of members."

Among the panel's main objectives are the encouragement of the correct type of glass in buildings and promoting the use of float glass in unconventional applications especially. Current members of the panel are Asahi India Glass Ltd, Gold Plus Glass Industry Ltd, Gujarat Guardian Ltd and HNG Float Glass Ltd.

The bi-annual GLASSPEX India exhibition, organised by Messe Dusseldorf India Pvt and supported by the AIGMF, is considered one of the industry's most influential events. "Global companies participate and showcase their latest technologies relating to glass manufacture" Mr Tyagi contends. "Apart from Indian entrepreneurs, visitors from neighbouring countries also attend, making the show an important forum for interaction between buyers and sellers."

CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED

According to Subhash Tyagi, the greatest challenges currently facing India's flat glass manufacturers and equipment suppliers alike relate to the high cost of local production, the low cost of imports and the need to replace traditional wooden packaging with 'naked' glass transport methods.

"The industry's main challenge, however, lies in reducing the cost of production. Otherwise, it will be difficult to compete against products dumped in the Indian market at cheap prices, despite there being anti-dumping duties in place."

Conversely, India's greatest strength relates to its size and population. "In India, there are no mandatory standards for safety and energy efficiency but once these standards are put in place, there will be an important opportunity for value-added glasses in India" predicts the Gold Plus Industries founder. ■

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