

# Indian visionary gains global recognition

John Wallis was among the invited guests at this year's Phoenix Award banquet in Berlin to celebrate the achievements of the 2013 Glass Person of the Year, Chandra Kumar Somany. They spoke prior to the event about C K's pride at receiving this recognition on behalf of the HNG family.

Having recently celebrated his 80th birthday, C K Somany could be forgiven for slowing down the pace of his busy lifestyle. His sons Sanjay and Mukul, together with grandson, Bharat, now head an experienced management team at India's leading glass container producer, a successful float glass business and a revitalised glass container operation in Germany. After six decades at the helm of Hindusthan National Glass & Industries Ltd, however, C K still maintains a close involvement with one of the international glass industry's most enduring family dynasties. Now, his achievements have been recognised by the Phoenix Award Committee, confirming this visionary entrepreneur as the 43rd 'Glass Person of the Year' and staging a celebratory banquet in Berlin in his honour, surrounded by close family and friends.

The award is richly deserved

recognition for C K's efforts in the creation and constant development of HNG over a period of more than 60 years. Having started with a semi-automatic glass container production facility, HNG was India's first to convert to fully automatic operation in 1952.

Now a spritely 80 years of age, C K still maintains an active interest in the company's affairs as non-executive Chairman. It is through his vision, a constant drive towards innovation and the adoption of the latest technologies that the HNG Group has emerged as a market leader in the Indian glass packaging industry. The group now operates seven fully automated container plants in India and one in Germany (HNG Global at Gardelegen), producing more than 4800 tonnes/day of glass.

Separately, the group also has a 700 tonnes/day float glass unit, which is soon to more than double

in size via the addition of a second (1000 tonnes/day) furnace and production line. Leading Turkish float glass producer, Trakya Cam Sanayii AS has recently created a joint venture with HNGFL and the Somany family, bringing valuable expertise in the development of valued-added, high performance processed materials for automotive and architectural use. Mr Somany confirms that Sisecam Group subsidiary Trakya Cam will be responsible for running a proposed specialist processing facility alongside the float plant. Both parties have a 50% shareholding in the venture, which is expected to exploit significant expansion opportunities in the local Indian market. "It is very different to HNG's glass container business in terms of products, manufacturing methods and customer requirements but I think we have managed it very well" says the HNG non-executive Chairman.

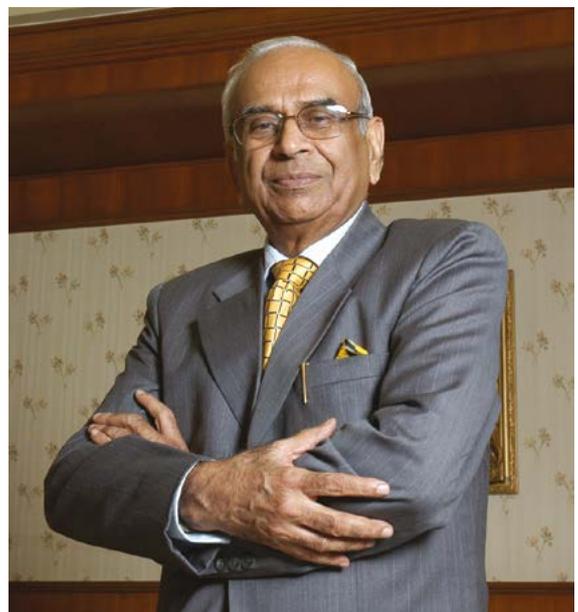
Collectively, the extended HNG family has now grown to include approximately 14,000 people in India and Germany.

## VISIONS NEARING REALITY

"Being the first Indian to receive the Phoenix Award makes me extremely proud on behalf of my nation, as well as everyone within the extended HNG family" says C K Somany. "It has been a collective effort that has resulted in this recognition, involving many colleagues



C K Somany (left) receives the 43rd Annual Phoenix Award from Gordon E Jungquist, 2013 Phoenix Award Committee Chairperson.



C K Somany has worked in the primary glassmaking industry for over 60 years.



Specially created ice sculpture of the prestigious Phoenix Award.



Lino Tagliapietra, winner of the 2012 award, was present in Berlin with his wife Lina.

in India, as well as new colleagues in Germany."

C K visited the former Agenda Glas plant at Gardelegen (now HNG Global) for the first time this October and was impressed by the progress made since acquiring the facility in 2011. "It is a very good plant, with considerable scope for further expansion" he confirms. It has long been Mr Somany's vision to create world class glass manufacturing plants that pursue quality, cost reduction and productivity improvement measures in a genuinely holistic manner, leading to the satisfaction of customers, shareholders, employees and suppliers alike. Witnessing the latest efforts of family members and colleagues in India and Germany clearly meets with his approval. "This integrated effort will result in the company

becoming an industry benchmark and a role model for systems, processes and results" he confirms.

Another subject of considerable pride for this visionary entrepreneur has been his personal involvement in the training of skilled Indian glass industry engineers, many of whom still work for the industry, both locally and overseas. "I am very proud of them all, I thank them for the respect they continue to show me and I monitor their progress with great interest."

Furthermore, according to C K Somany, HNG's acquisition of the Gardelegen glass container factory does not signal the end of

the group's international investment initiatives. "Eventually, I would like HNG to maintain similar size businesses outside India to those operated in our domestic market" he says. "Our experience proves, however, that success can best be assured by embracing the characteristics of the country, learning the local language and respecting their traditions... it works much better than simply imposing your own methodologies!"

Although no further acquisitions have been concluded yet, Mr Somany is confident that the HNG Global name will be more widely adopted in the coming years. He suggests however that while the HNG brand will become more visible in international circles, his personal involvement will gradually be reduced, leaving more and more of the business decisions to the next generation. "Sanjay and Mukul are both extremely capable, giving me more time to spend at my country home, running local community programmes and supporting the less fortunate." These may not be additions to the greater HNG family but they represent the latest important additions to an ever-expanding C K Somany 'family' and the latest laudable effort of this visionary and charitable gentleman. ■



Four generations of the Somany family were present in Berlin for the awards banquet.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
Hindusthan National Glass & Industries Ltd, Kolkata, India  
web: [www.hngindia.com](http://www.hngindia.com)