

# Diversification that pays dividends

A leader in the Indian glass industry, Emerge Glass has not simply rested on its laurels. As part of its strategy for growth, the flat glass manufacturer has taken the step of diversifying into the container market. In an exclusive interview with *Glass Worldwide* (preferred international journal of the All India Glass Manufacturers' Federation), Managing Director Sumit Gupta discusses the launch of Emerge's hollow glass plant and why he believes it will give the company a global presence.



Sumit Gupta has used his 15 years of experience to bring momentum to the Emerge Glass brand.

Armed with an MBA from a reputed institute, in 2004 Sumit Gupta began his journey into the Indian glass industry with aluminium composite panels (APC), which was followed by further projects and a foray into WPC, silicone sealant and sheet glass. By successfully instituting a manufacturing unit in Dubai for non-combustible metal composite panels, he set a precedent for the industry.

As Managing Director of Emerge Glass, Mr Gupta has used his 15 years of experience to bring momentum to the brand, one of the leading manufacturers of facade and glass solutions.

Part of the Alstone Group, Emerge Glass established a manufacturing



The Emerge Glass site in Rajasthan houses a recently completed glass container factory.

unit in Rajasthan to cater for the needs of flat glass in the Indian Industry. The factory produces sheet glass ranging in thickness from 1.2mm to 10mm and uses Glaverbel drawing technology to produce ultra-thin clear glass (1.2mm to 2mm). The company is "the only manufacturer in India with the capability of producing three different thicknesses of clear flat glass at a time – we enjoy an upper hand in market competition" says Mr Gupta. "In sheet glass, we are number one" he notes, commenting on Emerge's position in the Indian flat glass industry.

Emerge also manufactures environmentally-friendly (free from copper and tin) aluminium-coated mirrors, produced on a horizontal sputtering magnetron line for enhanced image and clarity, ranging from 1.5mm to 5mm thicknesses. In addition, the company offers a glass frosting service, sandblasting clear sheet glass to make it suitable for privacy

applications in bathrooms, conference rooms etc.

"Since our inception in 2013, we (have) earnestly ensured to manufacture the highest standards of glass solutions and constantly strived ▶



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Four advanced IS machines have been acquired from Shandong Sanjin Glass Machinery Co Ltd.

to match industry practices” Mr Gupta says. “Powered by innovative capability and engineering expertise, our customised glass solutions are done as per customers’ needs.”

Emerge Glass has 210 permanent employees and approximately 200 personnel on a contract basis for temporary/non-permanent jobs. The average level of experience is seven to ten years of knowledge.

The company's three main customers are M/S Ajanta Clock, M/S Sonam Clock and M/S Rohim Industries, according to Mr Gupta, who reports that Emerge's business is mostly domestic, with approximately 10% exports.

Although the firm is happy to source technology from both Indian suppliers and international companies, currently complete technical knowhow and supplies are from CTIEC China.

### Made in India

Sumit Gupta identifies the ‘Vocal for Local’ campaign spearheaded by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi as one of the biggest opportunities for Emerge in the flat glass industry. This vision for localisation emphasises self-reliance, calling for more products to be made in India but also for the promotion of local brands, manufacturing and supply chain – with the ultimate goal that ‘made in India’ products become competitive with global brands and establish their own presence worldwide.

An ongoing challenge for Emerge is the quantity of imports still coming from China. However, the company's website reiterates the message that “international quality of flat glass is available right here in India... now, you don't



Annealing lehrs during installation at the Behror glass container plant.

have to place the order in bulk and wait for a month for the shipment to be delivered from abroad.”

Mr Gupta cites producing ultra-thin glass as a major focus for Emerge's immediate future. Longer term, the company seeks to achieve 10%-12% growth and add further value with products such as mirrored glass. He describes the current status of the Indian float/flat glass sector as ‘encouraging’.

Operating from a fuel-efficient manufacturing unit with a long-life furnace, Emerge has an environmentally-friendly ethos and places great importance on recycling 100% of its water, optimum usage of cullet, using green energy and energy-efficient equipment, along with optimising power usage.

### The role of the AIGMF

As a member of the All India Glass Manufacturers' Federation (AIGMF) – the sole representative body of all segments of the Indian glass industry consisting of large, medium and small-

scale manufacturers – Mr Gupta is involved in active participation in all glass promotional events, working for the growth of glass. Access to federation resources to help earn and maintain an edge over non-member competitors is a key benefit of membership, he says, along with potential cost savings for increasing profit margins through collective and joint efforts; inside access to innovations and new developments; legislative representation to advocate for legislation on behalf of glass business and valuable industry networking.

Commenting on the importance of the AIGMF's role in the furtherance of the Indian glass industry, Mr Gupta cites figures from the Asian Development Bank, indicating that economic growth in developing Asia is expected to rebound sharply to more than 6% in 2021.

“As a result, Asia Pacific is likely to register comparatively stronger market growth in the forthcoming years” he says. “In Asia Pacific, India is predicted to witness the fastest CAGR in the ▶



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next five years. Western economies in North America and Europe plan to invest in making their manufacturing bases in India, resulting in expected significant growth over the forecast period. This will lead to rising consumer disposal income, resulting in improved demand for glass products in infrastructure and in packaging due to extensive demand for packaged consumer goods; particularly in emerging economies like India.

"As the glass industry in India is also expected to witness substantial growth leading to increased need, the role of the AIGMF becomes extremely important to ensure gain to the glass industry in India" he adds.

### Diversification

Motivated to pursue potential growth, in March 2021 Emerge Glass begins commercial production of container glass at its hi-tech plant, spread across 25 acres in Behror in the western state of Rajasthan.

"We have ventured into the premium glass packaging segment by manufacturing container glass in three categories from design to production, ornamentation of premium glass containers" Mr Gupta explains.

The Emerge container business will employ 350 people and cater to the premium end of glass packaging in the food and liquor sectors, with a view to capitalising on a supply-and-demand gap that has caused Indian producers to rely on foreign imports.

"With four advanced IS machines from Shandong Sanjin Glass Machinery Co Ltd, a Bucher Emhart Glass company, we will soon be producing 210 tons of high quality container glass per day" Mr Gupta confirms.

Along with the four container forming lines, Emerge has invested in forehearths from Shandong and Glass Era, who has also supplied furnaces. China-based Qinhuangdao Batch Technology has provided the batch systems, lehrs are from Amcet and cold end handling and palletising equipment has been sourced from AE Systems, Subline Engineering and MSC.

### Premium products and service

"Emerge will target multi-national and reputed Indian companies in the following markets: Liquor and alcoholic beverages, food processing, beverages, pharmaceutical and cosmetic" Mr Gupta confirms, listing M/S Globus, Pernod, USL, Nicols, Dabur, Mohan Meakins and Tops as potential

customers. "Increasing demand for alcoholic beverages, coupled with rapid growth of food processing, pharma and the cosmetic industry in India is expected to augment segment growth" he adds.

To differentiate itself from other glass container manufacturers in India, Emerge intends to focus on quality and service. Actual and perceived differences in product features will be prioritised, along with "customer service/delivery/ease of ordering; availability and higher level of customer or technical service; and demonstrated competence, courtesy, credibility, reliability and responsiveness" says Sumit Gupta. Suppliers must demonstrate their own capability, quality and adherence to timeframes to be considered suitable candidates for supporting the new business.

"Emerge Glass through its sincere effort shall strive to delight users with its products and services, ensuring overall growth in all segments" Mr Gupta attests.

Future investment will be split between Emerge's two divisions.



Operating from a fuel-efficient manufacturing unit with a long-life furnace, Emerge has an environmentally-friendly ethos.

"Flat glass is expected to register significant growth from 2020 to 2027 and possibilities for expansion will be suitably explored based on potential growth" while Emerge has "aggressive plans" for container glass and will invest in augmenting capacities by bringing in furnaces to produce cosmetic and coloured glass" says Mr Gupta.

The glass company is confident that its diversification will quickly pay dividends. "Soon we are going to emerge as a significant specialist player in glass manufacturing, not only in India but across the globe" Sumit Gupta concludes. "Our glass containers will adorn shelves around the world." ●

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There is confidence that the Emerge container business will quickly pay dividends.