



ON THE SPOT... Sanjiv Gupta

Sanjiv Gupta is General Manager,
Asia-Pacific at Guardian Glass.

GW: What are the highlights so far of Guardian's investment in Thailand?

Guardian Glass's two float glass plants in Thailand represent investments of approximately \$350 million and have a combined production capacity of roughly 1200 tonnes/day. They employ 660 people. The Nong Khae facility started in 1992 and produces clear float glass for architectural, residential, interior, electronics, technical and other glass applications, ranging in thicknesses from 2mm to 15mm. The plant also has a wet coater. The Rayong plant, which launched in 1997, produces tinted green float glass for automotive and architectural applications. Approximately 40% of total output from these facilities is exported throughout ASEAN countries, Asian nations outside of ASEAN, the Pacific region, as well as to Europe and parts of Africa.

We continue to invest significantly in our Guardian Glass plants in Thailand to create value for our customers by improving and expanding each plant's capabilities, among other initiatives. In recent years, both plants have been modernised, adding new equipment to produce value-added glass products and increase capacity, as well as making significant improvements to the furnaces.

In 2014, Nong Khae replaced its old wet coater with a new line to greatly improve mirror production capabilities. The company also recently approved an investment to add a laminating line that we expect to be operational mid-2018.

The Rayong plant completed its furnace upgrade and modernisation in February. This

project increased capacity, reduced the company's environmental footprint and added safety features. Guardian Glass recently welcomed more than 200 guests to a community and customer celebration to celebrate these advances. Guardian Industries President and CEO, Ron Vaupel welcomed the guests, including local officials and dignitaries; glass dealers, fabricators, glaziers and suppliers; and company officials. The event celebrated a successful association for more than two and half decades in Thailand and our intention to strengthen the relationship for years to come.

GW: Following the investment, what will Guardian's new production capabilities be in Thailand? How will your product range be affected by the new capacity?

Increased capacity at both plants will allow us to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of all customers. We have improved mirror production at Nong Khae, for example and will add a new laminated glass production line at Nong Khae in 2018. We are seeing more and more projects that



Left to right: Sanjiv Gupta, Montree Chanachaiviboonwat (Vice Governor, Rayong), Ron Vaupel (President and CEO, Guardian Industries) and Vigit Thongboon (Plant Manager, Rayong) at the 25th anniversary and customer event at Rayong.

specify laminated glass for safety, sound, security and decorative options.

Both plants are also working constantly to innovate to improve operational efficiencies that will enable the team to optimise the existing and new assets. Improvements in our processes will help increase regional growth. Some of these efforts include:

- Customer- and sales-focused product planning and scheduling.
- Improving line efficiency for the wet coater that eliminates waste and reduces chemical consumption.
- Creating an efficient order-to-fulfillment process.



The Rayong float plant was commissioned in 1997.

GW: How is Guardian positioned to meet the needs of existing and potential customers in Thailand and South East Asia?

Products from these two plants are exported throughout the ASEAN countries, to Asian countries outside of ASEAN and the Pacific Rim and even to Europe and parts of Africa. The increased capacity and optimised float process – as well as the expanded product portfolio – will significantly help meet the vast needs of these customers throughout the region and around the world.

In addition, our existing and potential customers are offered products from other Guardian plants such as advanced coated products from Europe, the USA and most recently from the Middle East.

A great example of how the Thai team is meeting customer needs through strategic planning and innovation is its unique and very efficient delivery model: Orders placed at the plant by 16:00 each day are delivered to domestic customers by 07:00 the following day. A variety of load sizes offer customers choices of how to receive the load within warehouse and unloading limitations.

We are also building our sales team to help communicate our message better to existing and new customers and to deliver an extraordinary customer service model.

GW: What was the criterion for selecting suppliers of equipment, materials and services to create a high technology production base?

We select companies that share our commitment to safety, compliance and quality service.

GW: Has the refurbishment had a positive impact on environmental performance?

At Nong Khae, the team was successful in increasing output and still maintaining best-in-class energy efficiency.

Environmental, as well as health and safety compliance are central to the way we run our business. Guardian Glass is committed to the efficient use of natural resources while operating in a way that protects the safety, health and wellbeing of its employees, the environment and the communities in which we live and work.

GW: Apart from the aforementioned investment, does Guardian currently plan any further expansion of its operations in Thailand and South East Asia?

We continue to apply Market-Based Management* to evaluate, plan and execute in the region. It is planned to upgrade the cold end at Nong Khae to further eliminate waste and automate areas that will improve productivity and we are evaluating new automotive glass products that we can produce at Rayong.

GW: In general, how would you describe prevailing market conditions in Thailand for flat glass?

Currently, our biggest challenge relates to 'talent'. The unemployment rate in Thailand is one of the lowest in the world. This puts added focus on both the recruitment of new employees and the retention of the existing employee base. Shortages of skilled workers and engineers make it important to retain good people ➤



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who contribute by creating long-term value for the business.

At Guardian, we believe that our people are our greatest asset. We feel strongly that our guiding principles and promoting a Market-Based Management culture within the organisation helps provide fulfilment and allows employees to develop and expand their capabilities to produce results that create the greatest value.

GW: What are the main future opportunities for Guardian in this region?

We are improving how we develop innovative solutions in all areas and not focusing only on production. We do this by:

- Driving commercial and operational efficiencies that allow Guardian Glass to better serve our customers long-term.
- Developing new channels in the supply chain to create new opportunities.
- Strengthening the team by recruiting new talent and enhancing employee engagement.
- Embracing a Market-Based Management culture that helps people to succeed and creates value for our company, our customers and the communities in which we live and work.

We believe that if we stay focused on creating value for our customers, while staying true to our guiding principles, our business and our employees will find success.

GW: Has the ASEAN Economic Community affected the company's strategy and performance?

The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) has a combined GDP of \$2.4 trillion and is Asia's third fastest growing major economy after China and India. The AEC seeks to reduce or remove many trade barriers within the region, with the goal of facilitating the free movement of goods, services, capital and skilled labour within the bloc. With AEC creating the environment of free movement of goods, it helps our Thailand plants to efficiently serve our customers in the ASEAN region.



The Nong Khae facility started in 1992 and produces clear float glass for architectural, residential, interior, electronics, technical and other glass applications.

GW: How has Guardian's position in the region progressed since the company entered Thailand in 1992?

After the successful performance of its first plant in Nong Khae that started in 1992, Guardian invested in the second plant at Rayong that became operational in 1997. Both plants have earned the reputation of a quality supplier in meeting the needs of customers. The Rayong plant, for example, is one of the few around the world that serves as a dependable supplier of high quality automotive green glass.

GW: How does Guardian's operation in Thailand contribute to the company's overall performance in Asia?

Thailand is the regional headquarters for Guardian Glass in ASEAN and our

manufacturing operations there also serve the wider Asian region and beyond.

GW: What are the main advantages of Guardian being a member of the Glass Manufacturers Industry Club, The Federation of Thai Industries (GMFTI)?

The Thai Federation of Industries plays an important role by keeping its membership informed about government policies and economic developments impacting the broader business community, serving as an industry voice on these areas.

GW: Have political uncertainties hampered Guardian's ambitions in Thailand?

Guardian is focused on creating value for its customers and the communities in which we work and live. Guardian has had a presence in Thailand for 25 years. We have strong confidence in Thailand and we look forward to continuing to grow partnerships with our many customers in future years, as we also continue to expand our production capabilities and provide greater opportunities for employees. ■

**Market-Based Management is registered by the Charles Koch Foundation.*



The Rayong plant produces tinted green float glass for automotive and architectural applications.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

web: www.guardianglass.com



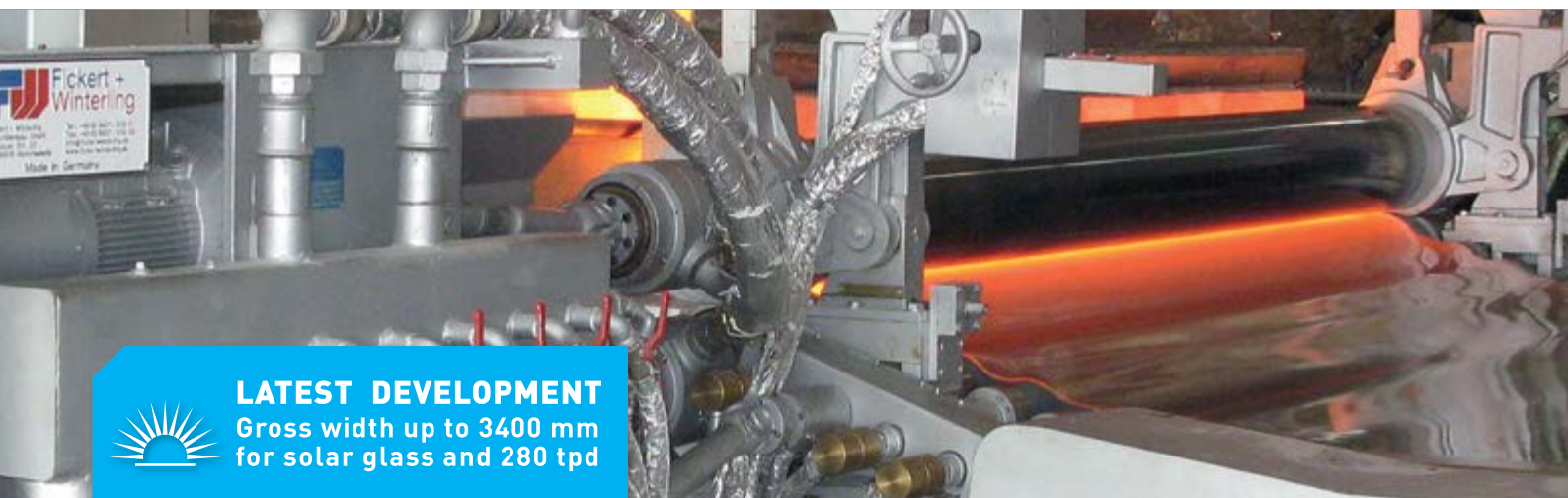
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