



The ASEAN Glass Conference was last staged in Thailand in Hua Hin and Cha-am in October 2016.



On the Spot... Somporn Temudomsomboon

With *Glass Worldwide* as its official journal, the 44th ASEAN Glass Conference will take place on 31 October – 3 November in Pattaya, Thailand. Somporn Temudomsomboon, Chairman of the Organising Committee, a member of hosting body GMFTI, and CEO of Kabinburi Glass Co., Ltd. (a Bangkok Glass business), outlines plans for the event and prevailing conditions in Thailand’s hollow and flat glass markets.

GW: How is the container glass sector performing in Thailand?

After two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, Thailand’s situation is continually improving and the government plans to declare Covid-19 as an endemic by the middle of 2022, allowing people to return to a normal life. Thailand’s container glass market seems to have recovered to an almost normal situation. Container glass producers expect to utilise their production capacity up to 90% this year.

Demand for container glass has increased in the first quarter of 2022. Local manufacturers plan on fulfilling this demand for the next few years by considering new investment or maintenance to address the situation of the pandemic and supply chain disruption caused by the [Russian-Ukraine] war crisis. In summary, we believe the growth of the Thailand container glass market is sustainable. The majority of supply is mainly for the

domestic market but the export market [is also forecast] to increase this year.

GW: And the tableware sector?

Thailand has been the leading regional manufacturer and distributor of tableware products for several decades and houses significant glassware, ceramicware and flatware

companies. In the past two decades an increase in demand for tableware has been led by growth in travel and tourism, thus, major regional economies like China and India increased [their own] supply lines to seize business opportunities. More recently, Covid-19 has caused travel restrictions, curbs on ‘wining and dining’ out, and intermittent closure of marketplaces. Consumers therefore started to adopt new ways of living that reduced the overall consumption of traditional tableware, and one-time use ▶



Somporn Temudomsomboon (second from right) with GMFTI and AFGM dignitaries at the 42nd ASEAN Glass Conference in 2018 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.



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Regional industry association

The ASEAN Federation of Glass Manufacturers (AFGM) is a 45-year-old regional industry association, consisting of the national industry associations from the ASEAN member countries. Current Chairman is Harris Hendraka and Secretary General is Sanjaya Susanto.

Member associations include:

- Indonesia: Indonesia Glass Manufacturers Association (IGMA).
- Malaysia: Glass Manufacturers Association of Malaysia (GMAM).
- Philippines: Glass Manufacturers' Association of the Philippines (GMAPI).
- Thailand: Glass Manufacturers Industry Club, The Federation of Thai Industries (GMFTI).
- Vietnam: Vietnam Glass Association (Vieglass).

In recognition of its leading status in South East Asia, *Glass Worldwide* is exclusive official journal of the AFGM.

Harris Hendraka commented: "The AFGM is blessed to have a lot of supporters, one of the most important being *Glass Worldwide* as the official journal of the AFGM. It provides the AFGM with a platform to inform everyone in the glass industry about every year's event from the preparation phase until the post event, as well as the papers presented during the event. I am sure I speak for everyone in the AFGM that we are very grateful to have this partnership with *Glass Worldwide* throughout the years."

In the AFGM online library of articles on *Glass Worldwide's* website, over 60 articles previously published in the magazine are available for free download, including exclusive reproduction of conference papers, market reports covering Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam and exclusive interviews with leading players in the region such as Asahimas Flat Glass, Asia Brewery, Bangkok Glass, BJC, PT Culletprima Setia, The First National Glassware, Guardian, Kemasindo Ampuh, L Lighting Glass, Muliaglass, Myanmar Golden Eagle, O-I, PT Culletprima Setia, San Miguel, Siam Fiberglass, Siam Glass Industry, Thai Glass Industries and Thai Malaya Glass.

Further information: www.glassworldwide.co.uk/afgm-articles

disposable tableware gained the market share. During 2020 there was an acute demand reduction of approximately 40% but the market has started to pick up gradually since 2021.

The first half of 2022 as well as the rest of the year and 2023 is expected to have higher demand [for tableware] considering that domestic and international tourism will continue to gain momentum.

The current geopolitical crisis is causing pressure on supply chains due to significantly high energy prices and freight charges, which will deter growth as the cost of raw materials exceeds double digit percentages. While this could work as a barrier for import and export, the domestic players in Thailand will continue to cater to the local demand that will steadily grow in the coming time.

It is important that tableware producers in Thailand continue to stay competitive compared to European and Chinese counterparts in order to hold on to the market share until tourism comes back in full swing. ▶



Somporn Temudomsomboon is Chairman of the 44th ASEAN Glass Conference Organising Committee and CEO of Kabinburi Glass Co., Ltd. (a Bangkok Glass business).

GW: How is the Thai flat glass industry faring?

In 2021, the overall construction sector started recovering and increased by 2.5% compared to 2020, mainly supported by public construction that grew 4.7%. Meanwhile private construction was still negative in line with a 1.7% drop in municipal construction permitted areas compared to the previous year. For the automotive sector in 2021, total car production increased by 18.1% compared to 2020, despite a lower total of domestic car sales which decreased by 4.2%. Overall, Thailand's flat glass market grew by only 1.3% compared to 2020, almost the same as the latest economic (GDP) growth of 1.6% forecast by NESDC [Thailand's Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council].

For 2022, Thailand's flat glass market is projected to expand by 3.8%, mainly supported by the automotive sector, which expects to produce 1.80 million units and the private sector, which expects to recover in response to the opening of the country in the second half of 2022 (including glass installation on mega projects).

GW: Hosted by the Glass Manufacturers Industry Club, The Federation of Thai Industries (GMFTI), what can visitors expect from the 44th ASEAN Glass Conference in Pattaya, eastern Thailand this October?

We expect the 44th ASEAN Glass Conference will be a productive venue for connecting new networks, new partnerships and updating [attendees] on new technologies. GMFTI proudly



The 44th ASEAN Glass Conference will attract attendees from the container, flat and tableware sectors.

and warmly welcomes our AFGM [ASEAN Federation of Glass Manufacturers] members and guests to join the 44th ASEAN Glass Conference.

GW: Following an absence since 2019 due to the global Covid pandemic, does this edition of the conference take on particular importance?

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic which has affected the world since 2020, this conference is going to be held for the first time in three years. It will be a great opportunity for all AFGM members and suppliers to meet, reinforce networks and exchange business and regional information; the technical sessions, business connect sessions and other activities will certainly bring us together to share all this again. Over the past years, there have been changes and adjustments in the glass sector and other industries and it is clear to see that business sustainability is playing an important role. That is why, this year, the conference theme will be 'Glass: Sustainable World Solutions'.

I hope that all participants will be impressed with a warm welcome, fruitful discussions, nice atmosphere and a good memory of the events that we can uniquely provide.

I would like to invite to the conference all those involved in the glass industry, business partners, and anyone who is interested in building a network and creating new business opportunities.

GW: What more can you tell us about the 'Glass: Sustainable World Solutions' theme?

The theme was created by my GMFTI colleague Yanattha Ovuthithum of L. Lighting Glass Co., Ltd. who commented: "Undeniably, the environment is a major concern throughout the world. People are looking for ways to make it a better place. Therefore, Zero Waste has been introduced to raise awareness about excessive litter. In this matter, it is an opportunity to communicate that glass products are one of the solutions to reduce waste by reuse and recycling."

GW: How beneficial will the technical conference presentations be to attendees?

The AFGM technical sessions are always a good venue for both suppliers and customers to meet and discuss the latest trends, technologies and opportunities in the glass industries. Lately, sustainability has been the most discussed topic for our future. Being one of the few sustainable materials due to its intrinsic recyclability, glass manufacturers are striving for excellence in sustainability. The 44th ASEAN Glass Conference is therefore the ideal venue for attendees to explore the next frontier in glass manufacturing.

GW: How important will the networking opportunities be during the event?

For many years, networking between AFGM members has empowered glass manufacturers in the ASEAN region. AFGM conferences have provided opportunities for members and suppliers around the world to meet and discuss business, including recent technological development and global changes. This has enabled us to move forward together as a strong regional player in world glass industry.

GW: What will the location of Pattaya bring to the conference?

Pattaya is a modern city located on the eastern Gulf of Thailand coast, just 150km [93 miles] south-east of Bangkok. Internationally-known as a beautiful beach resort, Pattaya is an important tourist destination in ►



Somporn Temudomsomboon (centre) believes networking opportunities are one of the great strengths of AFGM conferences.

Thailand and there are superb convention and exhibition centres for hosting conferences, as well as a wide range of accommodation, dining options and nightlife. The main activities in this city include relaxing on the beach, water sports, extreme sports, golf courses, local attractions and numerous restaurants serving fresh seafood and authentic international cuisine.

GW: What role does the GMFTI play in the glass industry in the ASEAN region?

The GMFTI was formed by manufacturers of container glass, flat glass, tableware, light bulbs, glass blocks, fibreglass, etc. Covering many kinds of glassmaking in Thailand allows members to continually exchange knowledge and ideas to successfully operate their glass businesses. We serve the domestic glass demand as well as glass exports to international markets.

We have also actively participated in AFGM activities for more than 45 years to build and strengthen our networking to promote the glass business in this region and globally.

GW: What does it mean to you personally to be Chairman of the 44th AFGM Conference Organising committee?

It is, of course, a great honour being Chairman of the 44th AFGM Conference Organising committee. Our decision to host the event was made quite late when compared with the past conferences, in order to ensure that attendees are not at risk from the pandemic. This has given us a shorter period of time to make all the arrangements. However, with support from GMFTI members, I am confident that we will run the event as successfully as it has been held for the previous 43 times.

GW: In your opinion, how important is the overall AFGM organisation in ensuring that the region remains a cost-effective manufacturing hub for glass production?

AFGM Chairman Harris Hendraka commented: "Throughout the years, the South East Asian region has always been known as one of the major manufacturing hubs for glass production, in flat glass as well as hollow glass, because of its strategic location, abundance of raw materials, the sizeable local markets, competitive energy prices and moderate labour costs. As the leading glass association in the region, the AFGM always strives to ensure that the industry maintains its competitive edges compared to other parts of the world by continuous information and market sharing. The ASEAN Glass Conference is the AFGM's most important [tool] in achieving this goal, as glass producers,

processors and suppliers gather at this annual event [where] we can provide the industry with cost-effective technology sharing through various technical sessions during the conference."

GW: Glass Worldwide is exclusive official journal of the AFGM. How does this benefit proceedings?

Glass Worldwide is widely circulated among AFGM members, informing them of activities in the international glass industry. This is beneficial not only for AFGM members but also for readers in the rest of the world to catch up with technical and business movements in global glass. Having Glass Worldwide as the AFGM's partner is, therefore, a great opportunity to promote the AFGM and the businesses of our members to wider audience.

GW: To summarise, what are the main challenges and opportunities facing glassmakers in Thailand?

The recovery from Covid-19 has resulted in high inflation and disruption in the supply chain where there is a shortage of some products and

freight costs are high. In addition, the European war crisis is making the price of oil and commodities even higher. The impact of this is a threat to all countries. The glass industry in Thailand is facing the challenge of managing its manufacturing costs in the face of a big increase in the cost of raw material and supplies as well as the prices of natural gas and electricity. In the near future, labour cost increases are also unavoidable. This challenge has indirectly forced us to be competitive in manufacturing costs by all means.

Among the threats, there are also opportunities: e.g. the depreciation of the Thai Baht, which makes the export price higher, and there are glass industry sectors experiencing price and volume gaps, allowing their sales volumes and prices to grow in both the domestic and export markets.

GW: Finally, are there any recent developments at Bangkok Glass Industry Co., Ltd that you are particularly pleased with?

Bangkok Glass Group places a great emphasis on business innovation development for not only technical [advances] but also society and the environment, which is what we have always strived for. As part of our successes, we have been continuously developing new glass packaging designs and lightweight glass, which have added value to our products and are environmentally friendly, allowing us to differentiate ourselves from other businesses... following the concept of the 44th ASEAN Glass Conference! ●

Further information:
web: www.aseanglass.org



Bangkok Glass Group is recognised as one of the region's leading glass packaging manufacturers.