

Gold Medal for Entrepreneurship



At a prestigious ceremony held at the Coral Gardens Hikkaduwa, on October 20th, 96, Raja Hewabowala, Chairman & Managing Director of Silicone Coatings (Pvt) Ltd., manufacturers of ‘Nip-polac’ brand Paints, was awarded a Gold Medal for Entrepreneurship for the Year 1995 (Large Category) in the Southern Province, by the Minister of Education & Higher Education, Richard Pathirana. This was organised by the Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Sri Lanka on a Provincial basis, to reward the entrepreneurs who have made a significant contribution to the Industry through

their initiative and hard work.

For Raja Hewabowala, this prestigious award is a deserving reward for his commitment and sacrifice over a period of one-and-a- half decades in the development and improvement of the decorative and other specialised coatings. Over the years, high quality and consistent standards and effective marketing of its products island- wide had made Nippolac a house- hold name. Its growth in Enamel and Emulsion sales has enabled it to successfully capture the market which has hitherto been dominated by international Franchise holding companies. Today Nippolac forges ahead as a totally national product with extensive laboratory testing and keeping abreast with modern developments in the Paint Industry.

The Southern Region has now been identified by the Government, for accelerated investment. Southerners have traditionally been reputed for their high standard of education and enterprise. Nevertheless, for decades it has remained a region of poverty, neglect and often the breeding ground of volatile politics. In this background it’s redeeming to find a few in the calibre of Raja Hewabowala, who have courageously developed a high-tech product which has been controlled by the international franchise holdings.

In spite of not being able to attract the upper end of the elite market, Nippolac has successfully penetrated the urban market as well. Even on the industrial paints, the quality of the Nippolac Hammer Finish, Heat-resistant Paints, Stoving Enamels and other coatings have proved to be very successful.

Silicon Coatings (Pvt) Ltd is also a member of the Paint Research Association of U.K., with whom Hewabowala regularly interects on various quality aspects. Most of the raw materials for the manufacture are procured from reputed companies like Rhone-Pou- lene, Du-ponte, Mobil, etc.

The company has two factories, one at Walgama, Matara, and the other at the Industrial estate, Ekala, where Alkyd Resin, the main input for Enamel Paints, is manufactured by its Associated Company, Ceylon Resinoplastics Ltd., where the holding interest was procured by Hewabowala in 1991.

Having started from small beginnings in 1978, Hewabowala’s success story is a phenomenon and the FCCISL’s award of the Gold Medal for his Entrepreneurship is a justifiable reward and an example to future entrepreneurs of this country, of the determination of a few who unostentatiously contribute to the Industrial

development of this country, creating wealth and opportunities for employment, and emphasising the fact that ‘Investment’ and ‘Expertise’ need not necessarily come from abroad.