

# The composed Multi-tasker

Young, striking and unassuming, Sanjam Sahi Gupta, Director of Sitara Shipping and the President of WISTA India, wows us with not only her presence of mind but also with her ability to juggle roles. It is under her able administration which catapulted Sitara Shipping to where it is today and also provided an internationally recognized platform to Indian women in Shipping through WISTA

by Reshmi Chakravorty



**M**y father Capt. S S Sahi was a Master Mariner and from the time I was a little girl I was enthralled by stories of his experiences at sea - I was hooked!" reminisced Sanjam as how she was determined from the age of seven years. Her absolute love for maritime industry made her forgo contemplating to get into the field of education - with her own chain of pre-primary/play schools after completing her MBA. "I am an extremely soft spoken and shy person; I felt I wouldn't be able to do justice to the company as shipping was a male-dominated industry. I've had to change myself to push myself out of my comfort zone," smiled Sanjam.

She joined the company at one of its most difficult times, just as the Asian Economic crisis erupted and they were also breaking away from their NRI investors; matters were in court, Sanjam took full responsibility and attended court hearings as well. "The lessons I learnt then have

been extremely valuable. The first breakthrough was when my sister Sumi and I decided to change focus of the company from the perishable cargo to the niche market of over dimensional cargo. That paid off and today we are one of the key players in the over dimensional cargo market," said Sanjam in her confident best.

A homemaker at heart, Sanjam is a hands-on mum who looks after her son and her official work with same gusto. She lets her work to do the talking on her behalf and believes that a lot needs to be done for women in shipping. "Apart from the 'mindsets' I don't see many hurdles or challenges but mindsets are extremely difficult to change. There's still a long way off to reaching a stage where there is some degree of gender equality in the industry. Women need to be taken seriously and not dismissed as non-serious. Women have different skill sets and strengths and bring great value and fresh ideas on a Board. They don't want special treatment but sadly

discrimination exists. If till date I face the same biasness, I wonder what others undergo." But strong-headed Sanjam gets her inspiration to work tirelessly and perform from none other than her father, Capt. S S Sahi. "Work is worship for him and I have tried to follow the same," she added.

The maritime industry is a beautiful world as a whole and according to Sanjam, talented young people especially women need to join the shipping industry and take the Indian shipping industry to greater heights. "We need to change the 'stodgy image' the industry projects and create awareness of our industry so people take pride in being part of the same. If I can inspire women to join the shipping industry and create a better level-playing field I would feel my efforts would not be in vain," signs off Sanjam. "Each day I interact with people across the globe and be part of an industry which drives the global economy. I eat, breathe, live shipping!" That's Sanjam Sahi Gupta for you. 