



People

## Number 6

11/27/2023 , 7 min.

As joint managing director of KHS' Indian subsidiary in Ahmedabad Partho Ghose has ambitious goals – both for the future of the company and for himself. As a man of the first hour he has followed and been largely instrumental in the development of the business and production site since their very beginnings.

---

### PHOTOGRAPHY / ILLUSTRATION

Frank Reinhold

### COVER PHOTO

As a man of the first hour Partho Ghose has followed and been instrumental in the development of the Indian KHS subsidiary since its very beginnings.

In the 25 years he's worked at KHS India prior to being appointed to his current role, Partho Ghose has been promoted exactly three times – jumping several rungs up the career ladder with each move towards the top. In 1997 he started out as manager of Business Development; in 1999 he became deputy general manager, was first made vice-president in 2002 and finally inducted into the KHS India board as executive vice-president of the company in 2011. Since the start of 2023 he's been joint managing director, running the business together with 68-year-old managing director Yatindra Sharma. At the moment the two of them are busy putting a number of ambitious plans into action. “We're on the threshold of a new chapter in the success story of KHS in India,” says Ghose. “Here as in the rest of the world, the megatrends of sustainability and the circular economy are playing an ever greater role. What's more, digitalization, automation, artificial intelligence and a sharp focus on world-class quality are becoming more and more important, especially in an extremely cost-conscious country like ours. KHS' subsidiary in Ahmedabad in Western India needs to rise to these challenges swiftly and become more aligned with KHS' global way of thinking in the spirit of OneKHS. We've steadily and profitably grown as a company right from its inception. In the last few years, particularly in the wake of the Covid pandemic, we've turned very successful – and now it's time for us to take the next step, or what I like to call a shift in trajectory.”

»In the last years we've proved very successful in India – but now it's time for us to take the next step.«

Partho Ghose

Joint Managing director, KHS India

## Big plans in Ahmedabad

A local three-prong expansion project has now been launched to this end. Firstly, the manufacturing infrastructure is to be expanded; this entails enlarging the production area by 60% to enable the growth in demand to be met. Secondly, the product portfolio is to be revamped and upgraded; whereas up until now lines with a medium capacity were chiefly manufactured, the focus is now to turn to the high-performance range, featuring the newest technologies KHS has to offer. And thirdly, KHS India's personnel is to be further qualified to facilitate the practical implementation of the company's expansion program. "This doesn't only affect Production but also Service, Project Management and Design Engineering," Ghose states. "The prospect of being part of the global technological development in state-of-the-art aseptic and coating technology, for example, inspires us all and is attracting young, well-qualified specialist workers to the company."

In addition to the aforementioned plans for expansion, it's predominantly the implementation of the internationally networked KHS system landscape, including the ongoing rollout of the SAP S/4HANA system at KHS India, that Ghose considers to be a quantum leap for his subsidiary. "Whereas to date we've been quite insular in more or less only servicing our own home market primarily with our local products, as part of OneKHS with its standard worldwide processes we can play a greater strategic role in the long term. On the one hand, digital networking makes the exchange of information easier with regard to production and technology; on the other, it allows us to work with the same tools as our colleagues across the globe – from offer preparation to after sales."

Following the liberalization of the Indian economy and the resumption of operations in the country by major key accounts such as Coca-Cola in 1993, there was a high demand for lines and machines for the growing beverage industry. In the very same year Ghose first came into contact with KHS, then an engineer for a local machine and systems manufacturer that produced under license for the Dortmund concern. He was

quickly enthused by the high-tech machinery from Germany and admired the fact that KHS was the very first systems supplier to make a long-term commitment to his native country and plan on setting up its own production capacities there. When in 1997 KHS ultimately entered into a joint venture with a local engineering company and made its first investments in the site, Ghose joined the company as employee number six – and a man of the first hour.



Partho Ghose  
Joint Managing Director, KHS Indien

»My job at KHS finally enabled me to combine my talent for communication and sales with my training as a process engineer.«

## **New home from home**

During his first few years he managed sales from Delhi. “Unlike in my last job, my new post called for plenty of technological understanding and finally enabled me to combine my talent for communication and sales with my training as a process engineer.”

In 2007 he and his family moved permanently to Ahmedabad. Originally from Calcutta in the east, the move to the metropolis 2,000 kilometers away was quite a challenge for them. “India

may consider itself united in all its diversity but basically it's lots of different countries rolled into one, so that in some places you may feel like a real foreigner. Everything can change from one state to another – the topography, the climate, the language, the eating habits. There are 22 official national languages – and I still can't speak the Gujarati spoken in Gujarat! Even the food here is quite different from in my homeland of West Bengal. In Ahmedabad people eat a lot of fruit and vegetables, meaning that in our early days we often had to travel miles to buy meat or fish.” Over the past few years India's seventh-largest city with its approximately six million inhabitants has grown much more cosmopolitan and Ghose has since settled in well here with his wife and two daughters of 15 and 18, both born in Calcutta but raised in Ahmedabad. KHS has also changed over time: the initial six employees have now multiplied to around 500, with a further 130 due to join them in the course of the company's capacity expansion.

## **Keen observer**

The amount of responsibility Ghose shoulders in his new role has also increased. He wants to offer his workforce an environment in which they can personally develop without fear of failure and are free to indulge their passion for the job. “There is of course an endless number of books and clever texts on good management but I prefer to lead by inspiring, supporting, guiding and promoting my colleagues. My teams are in a better position to say whether this makes me a good boss or not,” he laughs. One of the 54-year-old's greatest strengths is that he's an excellent observer who always tries to see things from the perspective of the person he's talking to and understand how his remarks come across – especially when dealing with people from different cultures.

If he has time after a full day at work and his hour-long commute in both directions, he likes listening to music at home, enjoying the sound of local songs in Hindi or golden oldies by John Denver, Harry Belafonte, Joan Baez or Jim Reeves. However, he much prefers to play his sarod, an Indian long-necked lute – although he hardly has time to practice anymore. “I hope to rekindle this passion after I retire,” he says ruefully. “If I hadn't become an engineer, being a musician would have been my

dream job,” he muses. “Or a mountaineer.” Since his days as a student, he’s scaled a number of summits up to 5,000 meters high – the last six years ago in the Himalayas. He’s therefore well able to cope with steep climbs – both out in the great outdoors and in his career.