

Success stories

SLMG BEVERAGES INDIA

Right on time

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Just in time for the start of the high season, soft drinks bottler SLMG Beverages is increasing the capacity at its facility in Chhata by 35%. The key driver here is an InnoPET TriBlock from KHS – this time for the Coca-Cola system in India.

NON-RETURNABLE PET

PHOTOGRAPHY / ILLUSTRATION

Frank Reinhold

COVER PHOTO

Before the start of the extremely hot months from March, international tourists and Indians alike seize the chance to visit the Taj Mahal – just a few kilometers away from the SLMG Beverages plant in Chhata.

With over 240 million residents, Uttar Pradesh in the north of India is the most populated state on the subcontinent. It's also home to a representative section of this extremely ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse country, as here especially the cultures of the north meet those of the south. The climate is also extreme: during the hot months of March to July, temperatures can soar to a maximum of 50°C. For the people of this region, sufficient intake of fluids is therefore essential to their survival.



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Alongside classic beverages in the Coca-Cola portfolio, in Chhata more traditional products such as Thums Up, with its betelnut-like flavor, and lime soda pop Limca are also bottled.

Huge market potential

Accordingly, the potential for the beverage industry is huge. Up until 15 years ago, carbonated soft drinks were still the privilege of rich and middle-class families. This has changed: soda pop is now affordable for and accessible to all levels of society, which in view of the logistical challenges prevalent in India is not necessarily a given.

Biggest Coca-Cola bottler in India

One of the country's big players is Coca-Cola India. The concern itself assumes responsibility in particular for local brand management and marketing. Production and distribution are managed entirely by independent regional bottlers. The largest of these is ↗ **SLMG Beverages**, a consolidation of four bottlers all run by brothers of the Ladhani family of entrepreneurs. They've worked for Coca-Cola in Uttar Pradesh and its neighboring regions for over 30 years. Through the takeover of a further bottler, they recently also secured the license for the state of Bihar. This means that in the future the company will supply around 350 million people with soft drinks. One of its eight associated filling facilities is located in Chhata, not far from the culturally significant metropolis of Agra with the world-famous Taj Mahal.



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The InnoPET TriBlock from KHS is the heart of the sixth and newest beverage line at the SLMG Beverages Chhata facility.



The InnoPET TriBlock, that processes up to 48,000 non-returnable PET bottles an hour, consists of a stretch blow molder, a roll-fed labeler and a filler (from right to left).

OUR VIDEO SHOWS

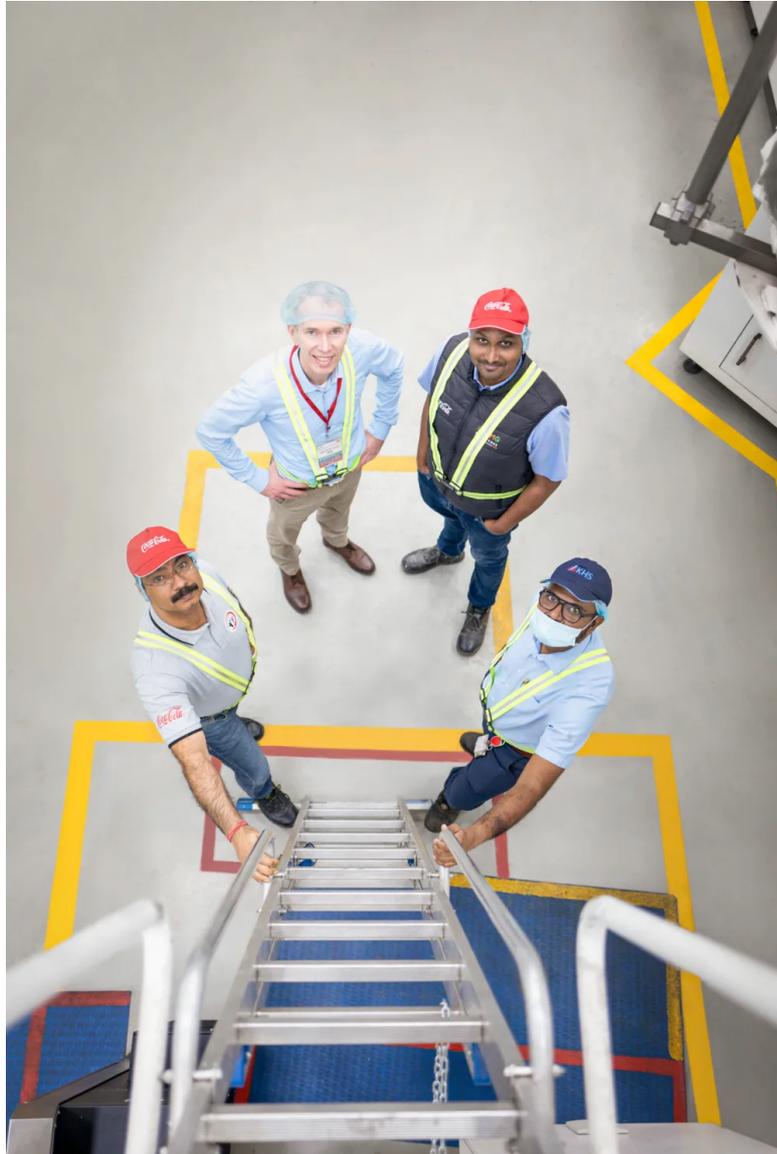
the new KHS PET line with the InnoPET TriBlock in operation at SLMG Beverages in Chhata.

[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)

Growth engine TriBlock

The newest of the six beverage lines in Chhata was delivered and installed by KHS. The heart of the line is the ↗ **InnoPET TriBlock**, a modular block system comprising a stretch blow molder, roll-fed labeler and filler that's particularly low on space. It processes up to 48,000 non-returnable PET bottles an hour holding between 250 milliliters and two liters. During the high season, the main focus is on small single-serve formats. The bottling plant now fills approximately 15.4 million containers per annum.

“In 2023, our output rose by almost 35% over the previous year and in 2024 we again grew by 25%,” explains Sriharsha Chilukuri, who is senior general manager of the plant. “We produce approximately 60% of our soft drinks in PET bottles on the new line.”



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Working as one (from left to right):
Suresh K. Arora, SLMG; Arne
Andersen, KHS, Hamburg; Sriharsha
Chilukuri, SLMG; Dharmesh Baria, KHS
Machinery, India.



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The partners are on an equal footing and enjoy a relationship that goes beyond the usual OEM/customer cooperation.

High tempo

KHS and SLMG Beverages have been working together for a long time. “We’ve been procuring machines from KHS since we started bottling for Coca-Cola,” says Chilukuri. The most recent examples are two Plasmex machines that coat the insides of PET bottles with an ultra-thin layer of glass. This protects the contents against oxygen pickup and carbon dioxide loss, thus preserving the product’s taste and extending its shelf life. The Dortmund systems supplier was now able to secure the companies’ first joint line project with its InnoPET TriBlock, well known for its low consumption. Various technological aspects, such as efficiency and an in-house roll-fed station for hot-melt, wrap-around label application, formed the key criteria for being awarded the contract. The promise of quick project implementation in time for the start of the high season ultimately clinched the deal; it’s during these few months that the company makes about 80% of its annual turnover. Just 40 days passed from delivery of the machines through installation to validation of the first bottle – an exceptional tempo, as Chilukuri happily remarks.

The local team at KHS' Indian production site in Ahmedabad in particular have every right to be proud of this achievement: besides supplying the conveyors and palletizers manufactured themselves on site, they also handled the installation and commissioning of the line.





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One of the criteria in awarding the contract to KHS was the in-house roll-fed station for hot-melt, wrap-around label application.

Outstanding performance

The result had all those involved convinced. “During acceptance, the line ran for ten hours without disruption,” remembers Dharmesh Baria, project manager for after sales and service at KHS. “This amounts to a performance of 99.96%.”

Local presence a success factor

Besides the technology, Chilukuri primarily appreciates the good relations enjoyed by the two companies. “Our relationship goes beyond the usual OEM/customer cooperation. As business partners, we’re on an equal footing and see ourselves as a team that works as one.” One important reason for this is KHS’ local presence. “This is a distinguishing criterion. KHS’ experts are available to us at any time and we can rely on getting exactly the kind of support we need.”

“We can rely on getting exactly the kind of support we need from KHS at any time.”



Sriharsha Chilukuri

Senior general manager of SLMG Beverages in Chhata, India

It's clear that SLMG Beverages has big plans: over the last few years, the bottler has invested almost €400 million in cutting-edge plant engineering. To date, the enterprise has grown annually by around 20 to 25% – and is aiming for more; in 2025 it intends to boost its turnover to over a billion euros – not least thanks to its recent regional expansion. This means that SLMG

Beverages will generate the biggest share of Coca-Cola sales in the most populous country in the world – in partnership and with the support of KHS.

FACT CHECK

KHS in India

The headquarters and factory of KHS Machinery Pvt. Ltd. are located in Ahmedabad in the west Indian state of Gujarat. Further offices are sited in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad.

Practically all KHS filling and packaging systems are manufactured here for the beverage industry (with the exception of stretch blow molders and Plasmax barrier technology).

Of the around 500 employees, approximately 70 work in Engineering and Design, up to 200 in Construction and about 90 in After Sales and Service.

Any further questions?

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