



## “Not afraid of the world”

**A great accolade for Hectronic. The company wins the first Indo-German Chamber of Commerce (IGCC) Prize.**

During the annual conference of the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce in Bonn-Bad Godesberg, IGCC Director General Bernhard Steinrücké praised the company’s “excellent export successes in the Indian business”. Stefan Forster, Hectronic’s Managing Director, and Rajesh Chandrasekharan, Head of Hectronic India, declared it, “A wonderful success that is sure to prove a tremendous benefit to us in the future”.

Hectronic’s Managing Director was more than a little surprised when he first took the phone call. The voice on the other end of the line belonged to Dirk Matter, head of the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce.

And the news Mr. Matter had in store was certainly worth hearing: “Mr. Forster, I am pleased to inform you that you have been awarded the nationally promoted Indo-German Chamber of Commerce Prize.” “At first I was dumbfounded,” admits Stefan Forster, “but then I ran through the whole thing in my head again and concluded that the jury hadn’t been that far wrong in its decision,” he adds, laughing. Upon closer examination, both reactions, surprise and affirmation, are fully understandable.

Stefan Forster attributes his initial reaction to astonishment that a prize from such a well-known organisation should go to a company the size of



**The German ambassador, Bernd Muetzelburg (left) presents Hectronic’s Managing Director Stefan Forster with the silver plate and certificate.**

Hectronic. “With 200 employees, we’re not exactly one of the biggest companies.” And yet the choice made by the 6,500-strong Indo-German Chamber of Commerce, the largest organisation of its kind throughout the world, fell to Hectronic “with good reason,” a point stressed by ICGG Director General Bernhard Steinrücké.

“We were impressed that a medium-sized company dared to venture into Asia and set its sights on both government institutions and major corporations,” he announced, praising Hectronic’s courage. “Hectronic is not afraid of the world,” was his resounding verdict. “While other companies believe that a “small player” would have no chance in this area, you chose to act. And you did it successfully,” concurred Dirk Matter. These successes are plain to see. Over the past year, exports to India rose by 50 percent. 2007 will see this percentage rise even further, as already evidenced by excellent first quarter figures.

The lion’s share of this increase can be attributed to the OPTILEVEL fill level gauging system.

With an order for over 5,000 of these probes, Hectronic has already become a national market leader. “And, in the meantime, we have also managed to install autofuel terminals and even the first parking ticket machines,” confirms Stefan Forster. The market is huge, and the prognosis for Hectronic excellent.

The company’s subsidiary in the high-tech metropolis of Bangalore, which now employs 18 people, will help guarantee further positive developments and already provides a positive indication of the company’s success. “So we have certainly earned our prize,” smiles Stefan Forster.

In addition to these hard facts, the company’s application submission had obviously also helped win over the jury. “The company newsletter that you enclosed with a focus on ‘India and Hectronic’ made a very good impression and played a significant role,” Dirk Matter commended.

As a happy Stefan Forster summed up, “Everything was perfectly in place”.



**IGCC Director General Bernhard Steinrücké led the event with humour and confidence.**



# On opportunities, bridges and partnerships

Speakers highlight the various aspects of Indo-German collaboration.

The seats in the elegant “La Redoutte” residence in Bonn Bad-Godesberg were gradually occupied. By the time IGCC Director General Bernhard Steinrücke opened the Chamber of Commerce’s traditional annual meeting, the hall was fully occupied and he was the centre of attention for 300 excited guests. This excitement



**Dynamic on the podium too: Stefan Forster giving his acceptance speech which was well received by the listeners.**

was more than justified: a glance at the podium line-up promised a number of interesting contributions. And these expectations were certainly met. The speakers provided a comprehensive insight into the economic and socio-cultural



**Talking, listening and making contacts was the order of the day. Stefan Forster in conversation with Trilochan Singh Sahney, Chairman and Managing Director at NRB Bearings Limited.**

exchanges between Germany and India. Each of the speakers brought a different perspective to these topics, although the overall tone of the speeches was generally similar. Namely: India is booming and offers excellent opportunities. Germany is no longer the “sick man” that it was considered to be until recently. And, finally, relationships between the two countries are first-rate and should therefore continue to be expanded upon.

Hectronic’s Managing Director Stefan Forster took up this theme in his award acceptance speech by outlining the route his company had taken towards expansion in India. The first steps were taken ten years ago when Hectronic outsourced some of its software development activities to India. After first researching the filling station market, the new subsidiary was established in 2006, marking a real milestone in the company’s history and providing cause for celebration.

This was soon followed by successful participation in a tender issued by Indian Oil, resulting in an order for over 5,000 OPTILEVEL fill level gauging systems, and the initial installation of autofuel terminals at Hindustan Petroleum Corporated Ltd (HPCL). And, most recently, the company has also gained a foothold in the parking sector. The South Western Railway and South Railway companies – two of the largest employers in India – have fitted the first stations in Bangalore and Chennai with PA2 parking ticket machines. These machines issue tickets for access to station platforms and are called ‘Intelligent Ticketing Machines’. “Things have really been happening over the past year,” sums up Stefan Forster.

The company’s Managing Director also stressed the pioneering work of his father Ernst Forster, whose enthusiasm was instrumental in laying the foundations for today’s success. This includes the founding of the charitable Gandhi Club, which sponsors Indian children and will be starting the construction of a new village within the next few weeks. A clear sign of how closely the company is linked to India.

He finished with a pithy anecdote to sum up the discrepancy that sometimes appears between Central European punctuality and Asian passivity. He related the story of when he had once slightly nervously urged his Indian business partner to hurry so that they wouldn’t miss a deadline, to which he received the nonchalant response that played on his Swiss roots: “Mr. Forster, in Switzerland you have watches, in India we have time.”



*“Globalisation can build bridges between countries and bringing people together.”*

**Baba N. Kalyani**  
Chairman and Managing Director, Bharat Forge Ltd.



*“Democracy, technology, globalisation and development are the main cornerstones.”*

**Subodh Sapra**  
Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Trevira



*“An equal and good partnership is developing between the two countries.”*

**Prasad Chandran**  
Chairman and Managing Director, BASF Ltd.



*“The world is recognising India’s economic success and we are very pleased about this.”*

**Ajay Dua**  
Minister for Economic Affairs in India.



*“We must re-ignite our passion for other cultures. The time is really ripe.”*

**Friedhelm Loh**  
Entrepreneur and President of the ZVEI.



*“As proved by Fugger as early as the middle ages, globalisation leads to long-term success.”*

**Dr Rainier van Roessel**  
Member of the Executive Board, Lanxess AG



# An extraordinary day for Hectronic

Hectronic's Managing Director Stefan Forster makes countless new contacts / Praise from the Indian ambassador

*“Your father would have been proud to hear you speak today.”*

Stefan Forster was particularly delighted by the spontaneous praise bestowed on him by the Indian ambassador to Germany, Meera Shankar. Hectronic's Managing Director made a number of new contacts at the event (“At one point, I simply ran out of business cards”) and speaking with Meera Shankar is sure to be one of the most memorable moments. The activities of the Gandhi Club, founded by Ernst Forster, were also a topic of conversation. The brochures taken along by Mr Forster (see photo) stirred up a great deal of interest and were all taken within a short period of time.

In her speech, the ambassador emphasised the strong relationship between India and Germany, as well as with Europe as a whole. She also referred to the importance of foreign investment to continued growth in India. Germany still has much to offer in this respect: “Following the reforms that have taken place, Germany is no longer the sick man of Europe and is now the engine driving it forward.” The ambassador expressed a desire for continued co-operation and said, “Let us combine the interests of both our countries to create shared success in the future.” Meera Shankar has been the Indian Ambassador to Germany since 2005 and is the first woman to have held this position. She has been employed at the Indian Foreign Office since 1973 and her previous role was as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the area ‘United Nations, Disarmament and International Security’.



The Indian Ambassador to Germany, Meera Shankar, and Hectronic's Managing Director, Stefan Forster, present the Gandhi Club brochure.



## Back with a smile

The Hectronic delegation presents the silver award plate and certificate upon its return (from left: Sales Director Refueling Christian Guttman, Head of Marketing Stefan Kech, Managing Director Stefan Forster, Sales Director Parking Kleta Brugger and Operations Manager Eckhard Fechtig).

## Largest bilateral chamber of commerce

The Indo-German Chamber of Commerce, based in Mumbai, was founded in 1956 and has since grown to include 6,500 members.

The origins of the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce can be traced back to an agreement between Indian companies in 1913. It was officially founded on 14 January 1956. Today, its 6,500 members make it the largest bilateral organisation of its kind.



The Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organisation with headquarters in Mumbai and branches in Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata and Chennai, as well as an office in Düsseldorf.

It is led by a committee consisting of 20 Indian and German members, all of whom are leading entrepreneurs or directors at German and Indo-German companies. Two of the organisation's

central principles are neutrality and equality. The committee therefore has an equal number of representatives from both countries and it elects German and Indian members in turn to the role of President.

The northern, southern, western and eastern regions have dedicated regional councils consisting of regional members and a chairperson.



## India – a long-term love affair

There is no denying that the relationship between Hectronic and India is primarily an economic one. However, there is also another aspect to it, a more personal side. And the first names that come to mind are Margrit and Ernst Forster. The former Managing Director of the Hectronic Group and current President of the Supervisory Board has been travelling to this wonderful and interesting country together with his wife for the past twenty years. "India became our great love in life," says Ernst Forster in praise of the country.

The Forsters wanted to be more than just tourists; they also wanted to help. As members of the Zurich Rotary Club, they supported construction of the Krushinagar village. They also sponsored two Indian children. However, their level of support is now entering a new, more intensive phase. Ernst Forster was the driving force behind the founding of the Gandhi Club Deutschland e.V. in October 2006. This association already has 65 members and clear objectives. "We are building a new village," explains Ernst Forster. The new village is called Vallamedu and lies in the



**Ernst Forster at a ceremony to reveal the donation barometer. He is joined by Christine Chamenzind from the VRO.**

state of Andhra Pradesh in the south-east of the country. It will provide homes to 60 families, which equates to more than 200 inhabitants. Until now, these people were living in basic huts constructed out of mud or leaves which had to be rebuilt regularly, especially after the monsoon season. In contrast, the new houses are built out of solid bricks. This represents a major leap forward for the inhabitants, and the aid programme is not just limited to house building. "During this work, some of the inhabitants will also be able to learn a manual trade, which opens up new future prospects for the entire community," says Ernst Forster. € 80,000 is needed to complete this project, half of which has already been raised through donations and a number of different activities. "And in August we will be joining a small delegation to lay the foundation stone in Vallamedu," says Ernst Forster, who is already looking forward to this day. He emphasises that this is a "mutual effort" involving close co-operation between supporters in Germany, the local inhabitants and the Village Reconstruction Organisation (VRO). The VRO, which was founded in 1969 by the Belgian priest Father Michael Windey, has since built over 600 villages in India and given the local inhabitants new opportunities in life. Sixty years ago, when Father Windey asked Gandhi how he could help in the country's development, the reply was short and to the point: "Go to the villages".

This command marked the birth of an extraordinarily successful project, a project to which the Gandhi Club is now making its own contribution so that it can live up to the values inherent in its name.

In addition to this major project, the Gandhi Club plans to regularly sponsor Indian children in forthcoming years and is working together with the aid organisation World Vision. It has already started sponsoring a nine year old boy.

## Advance with optimism

**Interview with Rajesh Chandrasekharan, Managing Director of Hectronic India.**

**HecNews:** Hectronic has been awarded the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce Prize. Are you happy?

**R. Chandrasekharan:** Of course. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase ourselves at an event with such prominent attendees. It motivates us and gives us reason to be proud.

**HecNews:** You can also be proud of the work that has been done so far.

**R. Chandrasekharan:** Definitely. If you think that only a year ago I was "going it alone" in India – with the support of the German central office, of course – and then look at what has now been achieved, it really makes you realise how far we have come.

**HecNews:** Can you give a brief outline of what has happened in this time?

**R. Chandrasekharan:** With pleasure. Following a period of market research and building up contacts, the real work began around two years ago when we responded to the first tender.

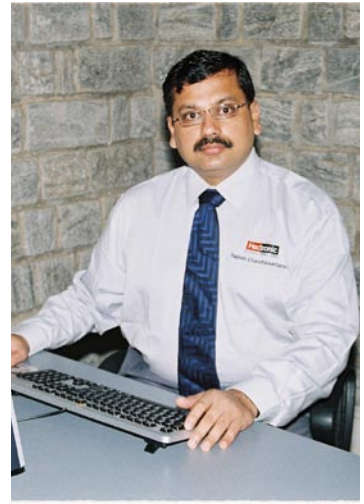
**HecNews:** And success wasn't slow to follow...

**R. Chandrasekharan:** That's right. Being awarded the contract to deliver 5,000 OPTILEVEL fill level gauging systems for Indian Oil Company filling stations represented more than just one step forward.

**HecNews:** What do you mean?

**R. Chandrasekharan:** Well, Hectronic had been playing with the idea of an Indian subsidiary for quite a while, and this large order finally dispelled any lingering doubts.

**HecNews:** A step that nobody regretted, bearing in mind how things have developed.



**Rajesh Chandrasekharan, Managing Director of Hectronic India.**

**R. Chandrasekharan:** No regrets. We now have 18 qualified employees at Hectronic throughout the four zones in the country and they are active in a number of different areas.

**HecNews:** What areas are these?

**R. Chandrasekharan:** In addition to fill level gauging systems, we have also installed our first autofuel terminals. And, since about three months ago, our parking ticket machines have been used to control access to train platforms at the South Western Railway (SWR) and South Railway (SR) companies.

**HecNews:** Take a look into the near future. What do you see?

**R. Chandrasekharan:** The refuelling and parking markets will really start to develop. I see excellent opportunities for Hectronic to take a decent share of this market.

### About us

**Hectronic GmbH**  
**Allmendstrasse 15; 79848 Bonndorf**  
**Tel.: +49 (0) 77 03 / 93 88 0**  
**Fax: +49 (0) 77 03 / 93 88 60**  
**Email: stefan.kech@hectronic.com**  
**www.hectronic.com**  
**Editor: Stefan Kech; Marketing Director**