

Water and Development Congress & Exhibition 2019



Blog: Discovering the potential in India

On the 14th of October, I took the plane to Mumbai. First time for me to visit India, a destination which always raised my curiosity, maybe because of my interest in Bollywood films when I was a teenager. In any case a region that has my interest! On the flight of Jet Airways from Amsterdam to Mumbai I saw many Indians from all over the world using Amsterdam as a hub to fly to Mumbai.

I arrived in the middle of the night at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai airport. Although a very modern high-tech icon for Mumbai, the structure is imbued with the history and culture.

It took a bit of time to arrive to my hotel, which was luckily not too far away of Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai. After a couple of hours of sleep, I was ready to discover potential sponsors and exhibitors for the IWA Water and Development Congress & Exhibition, taking place from 4 – 7 August in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Charles Joseph, India Regional Operations Manager of IWA, called me and introduced me to the warm and welcoming Indian culture. We had been sharing our ideas already, preparing for this trip.

Mumbai is famous for its combusted traffic. I am surprised that despite it looks chaotic, I do not see any accidents.

When entering the exhibition hall, I saw large, high quality booths of mainly Indian companies. Used to visiting other shows, I start with a first orientation. Where are the most influential organizations located? Are there any country pavilions? What is the structure of the show?



At IFAT India, the strong link to IFAT Germany is visible. There is a generic German pavilion and a pavilion coordinated by the German Water Partnership. But also, Korea and China expressed their interest in this region, with a significant presence at IFAT India.

IFAT's exhibition is different, from the exhibitions of IWA. IFAT has a wider offer outside water (e.g. solid waste and recycling). There is also a strong focus on trade, while at our IWA exhibitions we also include knowledge sharing and have a focus on leading edge technologies around the world and have an important combination with the congress and nourishing global relations.

There are many companies representing the domain of sanitation, infrastructure and desalination. Some organizations, I did not meet before and it was great to explore their important role in the large interior market of India, but often also outside the Indian boundaries.

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The exhibition closed its doors on the 17th of October. I barely had enough time to visit all the booths and noticed that most booth are potential candidates for WWDCE 2019 in Colombo. In the conversations I had, I met with very helpful, high-educated staff guiding me to the right decisionmaker regarding participation. Timing proved good as most companies are now working on their budgets for next year. Most Indian companies have strong ties with Sri Lanka and some of them know IWA very well. It showed great potential but I also realize there is still lots of work to do.....



During my stay in Mumbai people recommend me to see the Gateway of India, a beautiful arch monument built during the 20th century to memorize the landing of Queen Mary and King George V on their visit to India in 1911. Unfortunately, time did not allow it, but with this visit, I had my own Gateway to India experience.

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