

**PM ASKS SWEDEN
TO INVEST IN INDIA**

**BEUNOS AIRES -THE CITY OF
FOOTBALL, TANGO AND DESIGN**

**SOON YOU CAN USE
MOBILES ON PLANES**

Corporate Tycoons

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GREENING THE GLOBE



ASHOK JAIN
Chairman, JISL

ANIL JAIN
Vice-Chairman & MD, JISL

AJIT JAIN
Joint MD, JISL

ATUL JAIN
Joint MD, JISL

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Dr. Dhananjay Datar, CMD, AI Adil Trading

Problems arise in every business and only five percent of them get solved automatically. But the remaining 95 percent have to be handled by the owner himself.

A portrait of Ashok Jain, Chairman of JISL, seated in a wicker chair. He is wearing a light blue shirt and a white vest. His hands are clasped in his lap. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

ASHOK JAIN
Chairman, JISL

“The company will strive to bring prosperity through solutions for farmers pursuing dry-land farming in drought-prone regions, without a constant source of water”

Greening the Globe

The founder of Jain Irrigation put into practice his life philosophy, "Leave this world better than you found it"

-By Sekhar Seshan

A tour of Jain Hills in Jalgaon, Maharashtra, where the Rs 6,700-plus-crore Jain Irrigation Systems Limited (JISL) is headquartered, shows how its founder Bhavarlal Hiralalji Jain kept that promise and left it as a legacy for the organisation and future generations. The sprawling, 200-hectare campus, full of rolling green hills, with a profusion of plants, trees and other lush vegetation, is a sight for a city-dweller's sore eyes.

After the demise of the man who was known to everyone as Bhau ('big brother' in Marathi) in February 2016, just three months after his 79th birthday, the first dam he built, known as Bhaucha Dhakka, has been converted into a shraddha dhaam for him. Up on the hill, there is a series of five concentric gardens that form Bhaunchi Watika, which was dedicated to him on his 80th birth anniversary on 12 December 2016. Beginning with a plantation of 53 rare spiritual trees, Bhauchi Watika leads up through a Nakshatra Udyan which has trees representing the 27 nakshatras (stars), Teerthankar Udyan honouring the trees under which the 24 Jain saints meditated, Navagrah Wan that represent the nine planets and, finally, the Saptarshi Wan, which has trees named after seven great rishis.

From the top of the hill, you can look across to a vast area of 20-plus hectares, on which Bhau dreamt of setting up a university to deal with every aspect of water and its contamination and purification, including rain-water harvesting and effluent treatment. For he realised, very early in his life in Jalgaon – which, coincidentally, translates from Marathi (or Hindi) to water village – that water is life. Even more of a coincidence is the fact that a little over a decade ago, JISL acquired a company in the US, which was based in a town named Waterford.

What Bhau envisioned, and his team – now 2,000 strong worldwide, led by his four sons, Ashok, Anil, Atul and Ajit – are taking forward, has made JISL

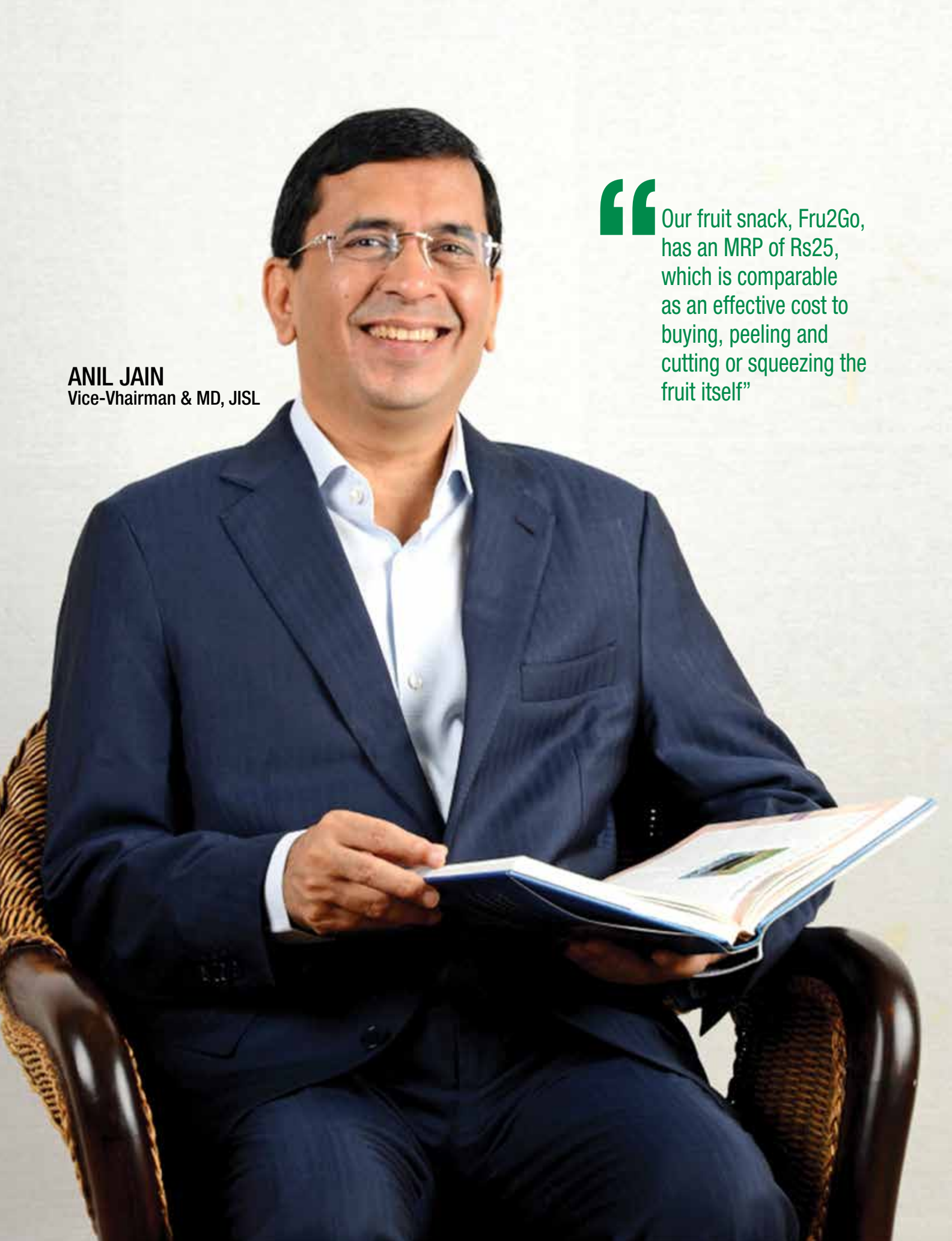


not only the pioneer in the field of drip irrigation in India, but also the second-largest micro-irrigation company in the world: a technology which helps farmers to realise the highest yields with the least amounts of water. Adopting and adapting what began in the world as an Israeli technology, created by the immigrants to that once-barren country to grow crops in their water-starved land, the Jains have gone a couple of steps farther, even taking over - and successfully running - a company in Israel.

Ashok Jain, who took over as executive chairman after his father passed away, looks after the recent diversification into ready-to-sip fruit snacks besides overseeing the group's overall activities. He is now in the process of setting up a new factory at Morshi near Amravati in Maharashtra. "We have been only B2B (business to business) players in this field so far. Now, we are also looking at B2C (business to customer) and the food service segment like hotels and restaurants," he says.



Plantation

Anil Jain, Vice-Chairman & MD of JISL, is seated in a dark wooden chair with a woven backrest. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a light blue button-down shirt and glasses. He is smiling and holding an open book in his lap, looking towards the camera.

ANIL JAIN
Vice-Chairman & MD, JISL

“Our fruit snack, Fru2Go, has an MRP of Rs25, which is comparable as an effective cost to buying, peeling and cutting or squeezing the fruit itself”

Adds Anil Jain, vice chairman and managing director who is also the chairman of the subsidiary company Farm Fresh Foods Ltd: "Our fruit snack, Fru2Go, has an MRP of Rs25, which is comparable as an effective cost to buying, peeling and cutting or squeezing the fruit itself." Besides, he points out, lots of children don't like to eat fruits, which the World Health Organisation (WHO) has defined as a necessary part of a human being's healthy diet.

Joint managing directors Ajit and Atul Jain talk of the many changes the company has gone through since their father established it in the 1980s. As Ajit points out, maintaining leadership in any business for so many years is quite a challenge. "There have been major changes like globalisation, but we have taken them as part of life and undergone a lot of change ourselves," says Ajit Jain. "We changed the concept of drip irrigation from something perceived to be only for rich farmers and having the sole advantage of saving water, to demonstrate that it is a tool to double farm incomes. Traditional agriculture has been transformed from being just a source of livelihood to a business."

Says Atul Jain, who looks after the pipes and wires businesses: "It has been a very interesting journey. We expect it to do much more. As a nation, we are embarking on a paradigm shift – and this, as I see it,




Plant

is a necessary shift." With pipes playing such a major role in utilities, the plans to completely rehabilitate city water supply and sewerage networks as part of the 'smart cities' initiative has opened up huge opportunities, he points out, adding that replacing the existing iron pipes with plastic ones will triple their

After the demise of the man who was known to everyone as Bhau ('big brother' in Marathi) in February 2016, just three months after his 79th birthday, the first dam he built, known as Bhaucha Dhakka, has been converted into a shraddha dhaam for him.



Food Plant

A man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a white shirt and khaki pants, is sitting on large blue coils of cable. He is smiling and has his hands clasped. The background is filled with more coils of cable, creating a sense of depth and repetition.

ATUL JAIN
Joint MD, JISL

“It has been a very interesting journey. We expect it to do much more. As a nation, we are embarking on a paradigm shift – and this, as I see it, is a necessary shift”

life from the current 30 years to 100 years because they won't corrode.

JISL, with its motto Small Ideas, Big Revolutions has manufacturing plants in 30 places around the globe – the one coming up at Morshi will be its 31st. Among them, the parent company, its subsidiaries and associates provide solutions in agriculture, piping, infrastructure through the manufacture of micro irrigation systems, PVC and HDPE pipes, plastic sheets, agro processed products, renewable energy solutions, tissue culture plants, financial services and other agricultural inputs. Over the past three and a half decades, it has pioneered a silent productivity revolution with modern irrigation systems and innovative technologies to save water, with its trade-marked approach of More Crop Per Drop. All this has helped farmers in the region - especially for more than six million small farmers - to get significantly higher crop yields.

The company also ushered in a concept of large-scale integrated irrigation projects (IIP). In 2013, it became the first corporate entity in India to build a dam at its own cost, of Rs8 crore, after going through the usual lengthy procedure of getting government permission. The five-year-old dam has a storage capacity of two million kilolitres, and its backwater extends up to 2.5 km. The river bed is hard, impenetrable rock – so the water could percolate only sideways, as a result of which all the



A photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and dark trousers. He is sitting on a large, coiled roll of black corrugated metal. The background is filled with many more similar rolls of metal, creating a sense of a large industrial warehouse or factory. The lighting is bright, highlighting the man and the texture of the metal.

AJIT JAIN
Joint MD, JISL

“There have been major changes like globalisation, but we have taken them as part of life and undergone a lot of change ourselves”

dry wells on farms lining both its banks got fully recharged.

While the micro-irrigation division – for which it is best known – manufactures a full range of precision irrigation products, JISL also provides a range of services like soil surveys, engineering design and agronomic support. It runs a hi-tech agri institute, as well as a centre for farm resource R&D, demo, training and extension. It also takes on various turnkey projects for agricultural and irrigation development with a holistic and integrated approach. The company employs over 1500 agriculture and irrigation scientists, engineers and technicians to strengthen its offering of services for complete or partial project planning and implementation – like watershed development through wasteland transformation, including crop agronomy and protected cultivation.

Jain Irrigation is also the country's largest manufacturer of plastic pipes, rolling out a wide range of pipes and fittings. Processing over 300,000 tonnes of various polymers a year, it extrudes pipes and sheets, and injects the moulds of a variety of plastics and engineering polymers. With all this, it is truly a total solution provider for various plastic piping systems used in the conveyance of fluids, semisolids, gases and cables.



The company also pioneered tissue culture (TC) for various species, especially bananas. K.B. Patil, who heads the TC division, says it can produce 80 million plantlets of banana at full capacity. It has established matching primary and secondary hardening facilities as well as independent R&D and virology labs. "The maximum number of TC plants produced anywhere in the world is 10 million. We have an output in crores of plants!" he says.

Patil, who prides himself on being the 'banana king' of the world and is known in every banana-growing country, recalls Bhau's rule that any new TC product must undergo trials on JISL's own farm, and those of its vast family of farmers, before being commercialised. This has been followed strictly by him and his team across the different types of plants: from bananas to pomegranates – "we were the first company in the world to create TC for this fruit back in 2008," he says, proudly – and oranges, guavas, onions and potatoes. There





is also coffee, which is still undergoing field trials in different parts of south India.

It is a testimony to the founder's vision and patience that allowed the team to import different varieties and keep them in the required quarantine for as long as nine years before getting the Government of India's permission to multiply and supply them to farmers. Apart from the time, the cost is also extremely high: the plants need to be kept in huge temperature- and atmosphere-controlled mother nursery polyhouses, as well as a modern biotech lab equipped with state-of-the-art facilities meet the needs of continuous genetic improvement and validation programmes in cultivators of onions, bananas, mangoes, and pomegranates.

JISL also processes tropical fruits into purees, concentrates, juices and IQF (individually quick-frozen) products. It has a dehydration facility for onions and vegetables, and a spray drying unit to process gooseberries and other fruit purees into powders.

It is only to be expected that this large scale of activity leads to a lot of agricultural and fruit processing waste – which is converted into biogas to generate 1.6MW of power, along with waste heat which in turn is used for refrigeration and soil conditioning. As the company's website says: "We care for sustainable farming, a system we profess and practice under the aegis of JAINGAP (good agricultural practices). In the first year of operation, our non-banking finance corporation SAFL has disbursed more than US\$30 million for small holders

to adopt agriculture inputs including micro-irrigation."

Among its other firsts is the fact that Jain Irrigation is the only company in India which is not only a pioneering manufacturer of hi-tech agricultural inputs but also a total agri-service provider, training and extension institute, large farm cultivator and an agricultural consultancy organisation. "It is through such multi-dimensional activities that Jain Irrigation nurtures the complete agri value chain and has become a one-stop hi-tech agri shop," the site says.



JISL's other businesses include PVC sheets, solar water heaters, solar water pumps, PV (photo-voltaic) panels and solar lighting appliances. Here the emphasis is obviously on the conservation of scarce natural resources like forest and energy. PVC sheets can replace wood as a substitute for building material and save our forests, while solar water heaters and photovoltaic lighting systems use the abundant solar energy available for free and save natural sources of energy like coal which is used to produce electricity.

"Our unflinching efforts in pursuit of excellence, appropriately blended with ongoing research and development efforts have earned the company the highest R&D awards of the country, and numerous other awards and recognition for outstanding performance in exports, fair business practices, quality, excellence etc," the site adds. "A lifetime commitment to introduce modern, yet affordable, and viable technologies in all our product offerings has compelled us to be creative and innovative." And the reward, it wraps up, has been millions of satisfied farmers and many happy customers all over the world, in the 126 countries where it supplies its products through a network of nearly 7,000 dealers.

Apart from all this, Bhau was a staunch Gandhian and philanthropist. He was the founder of the Gandhi Research Foundation, which has a museum on the campus boasting what may well be the largest collection of Gandhi memorabilia in the world. And just like his ideal Bapu's philosophy, Bhavarlal Jain's vision too lives on – through his very visible help to 'his' farmers as well as in the hearts of his vast extended 'family' that circles the globe. ■

