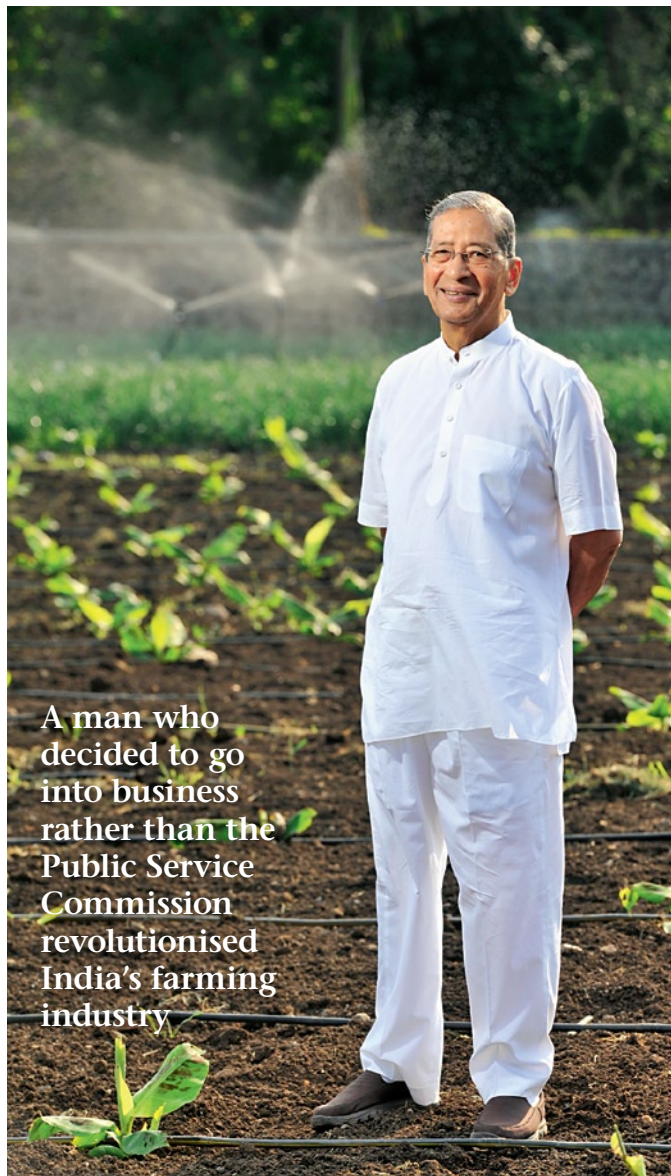


Jain Irrigation Systems Limited founder chairman Bhavarlal Hiralal Jain will no longer lead the ₹6,000-crore company he founded 34 years ago. The man whom everyone – his family, innumerable friends and associates – knew as Bhau died in a Mumbai hospital on 25 February 2016 at the age of 78 after a brief illness. The body was cremated at Jain Hills in Jalgaon two days later. As his eldest son Ashok Jain said, "We lose, God wins!"

It is not only the family and the 10,000-plus employees of the company he founded who have lost – so have some 5 million farmers across the length and breadth of India, whose lives he changed with the introduction of micro-irrigation systems. During his lifetime, he and his four sons also established Jain Irrigation as a truly multinational Indian company, with plants in 28 locations around the world manufacturing micro irrigation systems as well as other agricultural inputs like PVC and HDPE pipes, plastic sheets, agro processed products, renewable energy solutions and tissue culture plants, besides providing financial services to its customers.

The young Bhavarlal was sent to college in the early 1950s by his father and uncle. Armed with a law degree in 1963, however, he decided not to take up the post of Deputy Collector for which he had been selected. Instead, he got an Esso kerosene and crude oil dealership, and bought empty drums with his family's total savings of ₹7,000 over the past three generations. He moved on to selling farming equipment and other inputs, then decided to get into manufacturing.

Giant steps



SANJAY BORADE

A man who decided to go into business rather than the Public Service Commission revolutionised India's farming industry

Bhavarlal Hiralal Jain

1937 - 2016



ymous company a synonym for micro-irrigation. Over the years, he survived five heart attacks, two bypass operations and an angioplasty – but he kept going with a pacemaker-cum-defibrillator.

It remains to his sons – his 'A' team of Ashok, Anil, Ajit and Atul – besides the entire team he has built up to take his dreams forward.

Says a *Business India* article in July 1987, A Rich Harvest – which the editors of the book *An Entrepreneur Deciphered* have described as "the first important article" about him: "The group's prime asset has been Jain's amazing skill in managing his finances." The author of the article, R.N. Bhaskar, quoted Jain as believing that his group's sales should easily exceed ₹100 crore by 1989-90, and some observers believe that it could exceed even that." Actually, the book notes, the figure was ₹107 crore.

Two decades later, Jain told *Business India*: "I didn't believe the forecasts that Bhaskar had made. But we exceeded them!" The book, which begins and ends with articles from the same magazine, also has two more in between, among the 40 it has culled from various publications over the years. Its back cover carries a photograph of the protagonist, with a quotation from him: "I believe conservation of water is the most important duty of any individual, community or nation. When millions die of thirst & hunger, who has the right to squander water?"

That was the belief to which Bhau dedicated his life, making his epon-

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