

Valve World

INDIA & MIDDLE EAST

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OCTOBER / NOVEMBER
2020 - ISSUE 11

SPOTLIGHT ON

JD Jones poised for explosive growth

With strong leadership, a clear strategy, and the ability to quickly adapt to changing circumstances, JD Jones is a real force in the manufacture and supply of fluid sealing products. The product range – including gland packings, seals, compression packings, PTFE products, etc – finds widespread use in a diverse mix of industries around the world. The company has also forged win-win partnerships with many leading valvemakers, as Valve World India & Middle East discovered when speaking recently to CEO Mr. Ashish Bajoria.

"When Covid-19 struck India in February we of course complied fully with the lockdown. But we did not allow ourselves to be cowed down by the situation, far from it. We continued to support our clients to the very best of our ability. Moreover, we used this period as the ideal opportunity to brainstorm about new markets. I am therefore delighted to say that since February 2020 we have in fact opened up four new product verticals."

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NFC's plans for a new facility at Kota by 2022

A new facility of the city-based Nuclear Fuel Complex, with a capacity to produce 500 tonnes of nuclear fuel bundles, will come up in Kota, Rajasthan, in July 2022. "We are planning to produce nearly 500 tonnes of fuel but we have made a provision wherein we can expand it in three years to produce 1000 tonnes," NFC chairman and chief executive Dinesh Srivastava said. In all 1,500 engineers, technical people and workers will be employed at NFC-Kota, and approvals are expected soon from the union ministry of finance for this. Nuclear Fuel Complex is the only place in the country where nuclear fuel bundles are produced for supplying fuel to domestic nuclear power reactors. "At NFC



Hyderabad, we have already demonstrated the capacity to produce 1,500 tonnes of fuel bundles in a year. but we produce only as per our requirement. However, in the next few years, if need be, the capacity

will be increased to produce 2,000 fuel bundles a year," Srivastava said. The fuel bundles production, as needed now, is 1,200 tonnes and is being supplied to nuclear power reactors. The fuel bun-

dles, which will be produced at NFC-Kota, will serve the needs of the nuclear power reactors in the vicinity and also elsewhere. "We are absolutely comfortable on our production and will be able to supply whatever demand will arise. Nuclear fuel supply will never be a problem," Srivastava said. "We have made huge progress and there is very good physical progress. We expect that in another three to four months our civil work may be nearly complete. We have been able to able to spend nearly 35 per cent of our budget on equipment," the chairman and chief executive said. As many as 30 engineers have been placed at the site and are working there.



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JD Jones poised for explosive growth

With strong leadership, a clear strategy, and the ability to quickly adapt to changing circumstances, JD Jones is a real force in the manufacture and supply of fluid sealing products. The product range – including gland packings, seals, compression packings, PTFE products, etc – finds widespread use in a diverse mix of industries around the world. The company has also forged win-win partnerships with many leading valvemakers, as Valve World India & Middle East discovered when speaking recently to CEO Mr. Ashish Bajoria.

By David Sear

Talk to any entrepreneur nowadays and the conversation almost invariably starts with Covid-19. The pandemic has touched so many lives and impacted so many businesses that it cannot be ignored. Such was also the case when *Valve World India & Middle East* contacted Mr Ashish Bajoria for an update on progress at JD Jones.

“When Covid-19 struck India in February we of course complied fully with the lockdown. But we did not allow ourselves to be cowed down by the situation, far from it. It is not in our DNA to accept defeat. We therefore continued to support our clients to the very best of our ability. Moreover, with many of the team at home with time on their hands, we used this period as the ideal opportunity to brainstorm about new markets. We spent our time very effectively, calling customers, researching markets, and identifying promising new product verticals. I am therefore delighted to say that since February 2020 we have in fact opened up four new verticals.

These are: injection moulded PEEK components; laminar seals for triple offset butterfly valves & double offset butterfly valves; serrated gaskets / kammprofile gaskets; and finally PTFE membrane/diaphragms.”

In addition to identifying new product verticals, JD Jones invested strongly to ensure the right customers would hear about the enlarged portfolio. Mr Bajoria: “we stepped up marketing efforts ten-fold, hiring new people for the marketing department and investing in digital campaigns. This has really helped the business, further augmenting the growth that has followed on from the capital investments made in 2019. This positive approach means that JD Jones is now placed to jump explosively.”

Asked to clarify expenditure in 2019, Mr. Bajoria comments as follows: “We wanted to expand capacity, invest in automation, and also develop high-speed, efficient machinery. Our goal was two-fold: to increase output whilst further driving down the rejection rate.”

Investments were made across all product verticals. “For example, where graphite rings are produced we now have automatic graphite molding machines, the best quality braiding machines are in place to make braided packings, and in the fluoropolymers cell we have started investing heavily in PEEK and other fluoropolymers. Other expenditure include high-end 3D printers, injection moulding units, automatic presses, graphite cutters, etc,” states Mr Bajoria.

With the final machinery and equipment currently being installed and commissioned, JD Jones will soon benefit from a significantly enlarged production capacity, says Mr Bajoria. “Speaking about production I can tell you that right now there is no dip in output volume at all. In fact, we are currently shipping out more than our previous monthly average in a peak year.”

Whatever the business climate, JD Jones continues to offer a very flexible service to all customers. “Some clients can be served from stock whilst for others we make products to order,” explains Mr Bajoria. “This very much depends on the unique requirements of each individual purchaser. Some place long-term contracts whereby we ship bulk consignments each quarter, whilst for others with more flexible needs we can guarantee



JD Jones has forged win-win partnerships with many leading valvemakers.

shipment within 24-48 hours. We are always happy to oblige.”

Solutions provider

Today, JD Jones offers a vast range of seals and packings which are used in widespread applications across a myriad of industries. Mr. Bajoria: “we have evolved into a sealing company with a very comprehensive portfolio. I believe we are the only company in the world that manufactures such a wide range of top quality sealing products under one roof. We do not trade third-party sealing products but have amassed manufacturing know-how and applications expertise in all the products we offer. This intrinsic knowledge underpins our strategy to be a real ‘one-stop-shop’ solutions provider for customers.”

Sealing products for valves continues to be a core competence, stresses Mr Bajoria. “The valve industry is very important to us, and probably accounts for 40-50% of our business. Our customer list includes many of the world’s finest valve makers with top names from the US, Europe, India, China, South-East Asia, the Middle East, Singapore, etc. Importantly, such customers turn to JD Jones not just for sealing products as such, but in addition for the extensive technical support that the company can offer.”

Customers have a high regard for JD Jones’ in-house testing capabilities, adds Mr Bajoria. “To conduct our own research and development, as well as to assist valve makers in complying with standards such as API 622,

we decided to establish our own test facility several years ago. Today this features a high-pressure bunker, cryogenic systems and three leak detectors. So far well over thirty valve companies have shipped out valves, entrusting us to run tests to identify the optimum packing material for their valve plus the intended application.”

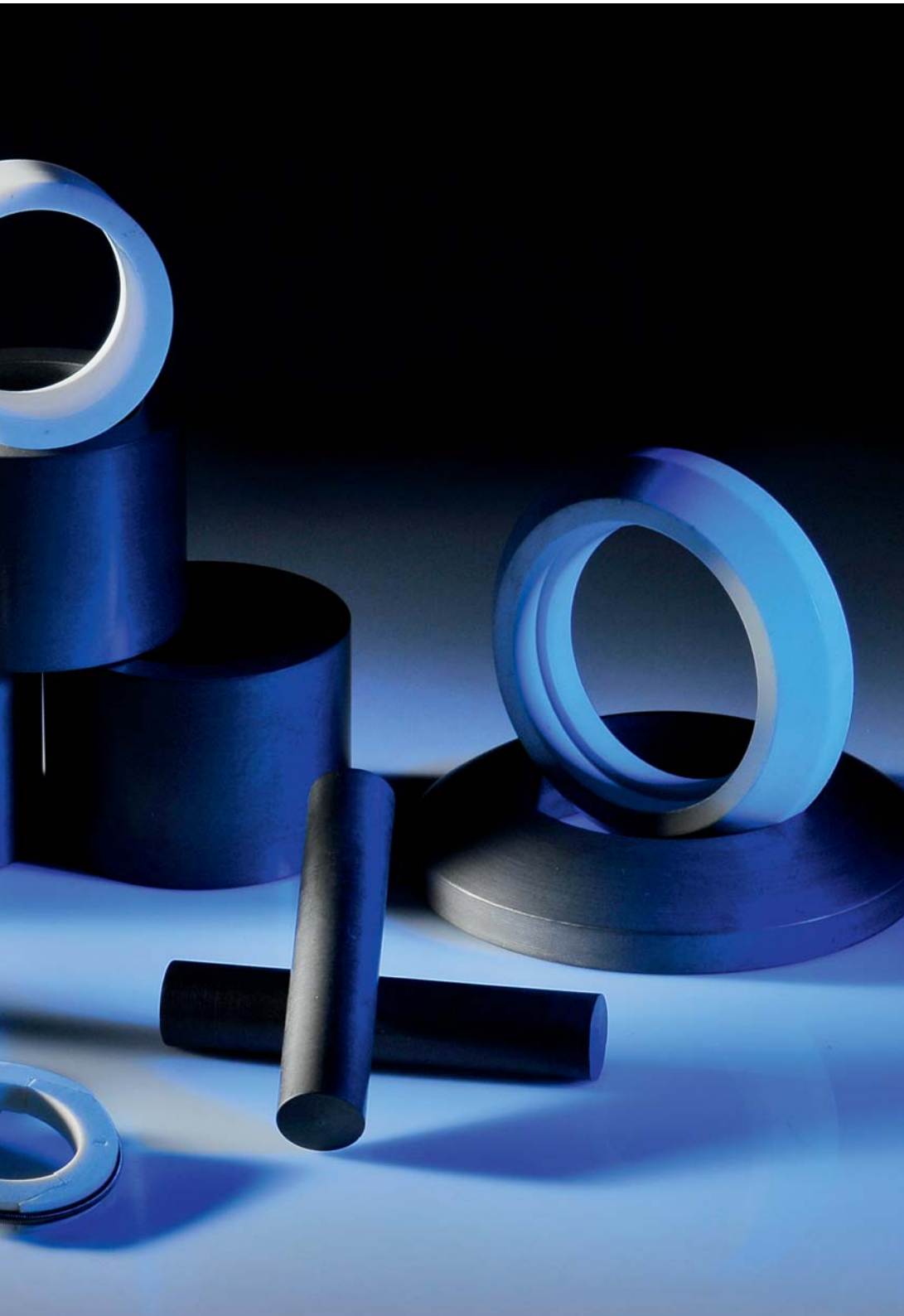
Minimizing leakage rates from valves involves much more than simply inserting an off-the-shelf packing, explains Mr Bajoria. “There are simply too many variables to consider, in both the valve and the packing. Therefore, here in our workshop we can treat the valve as a constant and then focus all our attention on the packing, making those subtle yet important changes to the packing material, the way that material is put together, the gland load, etc, until we find the ultimate solution for the valve.”

Mr Bajoria further notes that all of JD Jones’ emissions tests are run using helium, which is of course a very permeable gas. “If valves pass the tests we perform here at our premises, we can be 99% confident that the self-same valve and packing will also pass tests performed by an independent testing house as may be required by standards authorities. That is because such tests are normally conducted using methane which, with a larger molecular structure, is less likely to leak than helium.”

Once the in-house tests have been completed, JD Jones then carefully stores away the valve should future tests be required. Mr. Bajoria: “this industry is dynamic. National



From PTFE to graphite and from carbon fibre to wire mesh jacketing, JD Jones is without doubt an all-round materials professional.



and global standards can change quite regularly whilst end users may impose additional requirements. In such cases manufacturers can request us to review the packing selection and retest the valve. We are always happy to oblige.”

Investing in technology

With this comprehensive approach to the market, featuring continuous research and development, close cooperation with valve makers, and the determination to investigate the potential of new materials, JD Jones has broken the mold for packing companies, states Mr Bajoria. “The traditional way to do business is to make a range of standard packings and then to sit back and let the customer make the selection. Such traditional models will soon be swept aside. Increasingly we are seeing how buyers are no longer basing procurement decisions on

low cost prices but are looking for a packing manufacturer like JD Jones that can deliver services as well. We are a customer-centric company, looking to build trust and prove our strengths as a back-end partner. Our goal is to operate as a boutique firm, providing quality products and reliable solutions at realistic prices.”

This strategy also keys into JD Jones’ decision to invest so heavily in production automation during 2019. “If we were to rely on cheap labour we would not survive. It is as simple as that. Our vision is to focus on technology, investing in automation and the on-going training of our staff. This will deliver the strong growth we want. Our approach is scientific. Within each product vertical we consider all the processes required to make that product. Flow charts are drawn up so that we can pinpoint areas for automation. The cost is not the relevant factor here; rather how we can evolve and grow to set ourselves

aside from competitors in low-cost countries. Clients are very positive when they discover just how automated our production lines are, the degree to which we have expanded capacity and the numerous product verticals we have developed. This strategy has been a real game-changer since 2018.”

Materials professionals

From PTFE to graphite and from carbon fibre to wire mesh jacketing, JD Jones is without doubt an all-round materials professional. Such wide knowledge has brought additional benefits given the trend for even more advanced sealing systems. “Many packings are now being made from combinations of various materials, such as a braided packing with fluoropolymer parts,” says Mr Bajoria. “To do this properly requires a deep knowledge of all the constituent materials. In this respect as well, our expertise gives customers extra confidence.”

Exploring new materials and establishing additional product verticals is very much part of JD Jones’ ongoing strategy, emphasizes Mr Bajoria. “As a team we are all determined to serve customers to the very best of our capabilities and to enhance our one-stop shop reputation. Sometimes new product verticals follow naturally once we have identified new markets, at other times materials research projects may be initiated based on a customer suggestion. That is something that happens quite a lot. For example, our fluoroplastics division has grown immensely thanks to client input. Our close liaison with some of the global giants in the valve arena has resulted in a multitude of components, such as valve seats, radial seals, special parts, chevron rings, etc. Along the way we have widened our expertise with materials such as PTFE, PEEK, TFM, PTCFE, etc.”

As an aside, Mr Bajoria stresses that fluoroplastics should not be seen as a uniform group of materials which can be readily interchanged. “Each fluoroplastic requires its own know-how and in many cases is processed using bespoke machinery. But this is where we excel; we go deeper into each product and each vertical, always investing, researching, and developing. Customers know this. We are now in a position of trust, receiving calls from customers asking us to provide products not even in our catalogue! They have full confidence in our ability to develop a product from scratch and know that we will not release it until we are 100% satisfied it will perform as expected.”

Whilst discussing the early years of JD Jones’ fluoroplastics vertical, Mr Bajoria



Mr. Ashish Bajoria is CEO at JD Jones.

recalls positive feedback from an Italian customer who had placed a first-time order for PTFE valve seats. “This customer gave us the opportunity to develop PTFE components. After extensive research and testing we shipped out the required seats, knowing full well that the client would subject them to very stringent testing. After a couple of weeks, we received a reply: the client was amazed as he had never seen such positive test results before! Simply put, our seats outperformed all other components they had previously received from competitors. Overnight this company standardized on our product, which gave us a huge boost. Of course, it takes expertise and good machinery to make a quality product, but more than that you have to have the right attitude throughout the company. You need heart. That really helps the team to go forward even more. I reckon this sums up JD Jones very nicely; we are striving for success and want to deliver optimum sealing products and services to our customers.”

JD Jones’ Product Verticals

- Low-emission packing
- Graphite sealing products
- Pressure seal gaskets
- Valve seats
- Braided packing
- Packings for piston valves
- Specialized pressure seals
- Fluoroplastics (rods/bushes/machined components)
- Chevron packing sets
- Custom-made sealing solutions
- Laminar seals

Facts & Figures

Company:	JD Jones
Office & manufacturing:	Kolkata
Key products:	compression packing, expanded PTFE products, industrial polymer products, insulation, graphite sealing, speciality lubricants, low emission packing
Industries served:	breweries, cement plants, chemicals, fertilisers, food processing, mining, refining, paint manufacture, petrochemicals, power plants, pulp & paper, steel mills, sugar plants, valve manufacturers



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