

From the moment he entered the Orind International Limited, Mishra was destined to be the person who would bring changes to the company. When he set his feet on China's soil, he realized his dreams would come true in this country

Mishra's China Dream

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To a cheetah, survival depends on seizing and guarding the best spot of food sources, lying low to watch for preys and predators on the savanna before his eyes.

My goal is to make ORIND the largest refractory manufacturer in Asia by the 2008 Beijing Olympics." The Group Managing Director of ORIND Refractories Group, Rajeshwar Mishra, was excited at making the declaration, sitting in his office in Beijing. From the window, one can see an emerald meadow against the background of high-rise buildings of Beijing, and further on, lies his homeland, India, and ORIND's plants and facilities all across the world. To Mishra, the world outside his window is the savanna for ORIND to run free.

In the past decade, Mishra has helped ORIND achieve the goal of globalization and China is the place where he started it all.

Water Testing

Mishra accompanied the Group Chairman, Mr. Ravin Jhunjhunwala, to visit China for the first time in 1988. ORIND, established in 1936, was already the leader and one of the

largest refractory manufacturers in India. Its products were exported to some 37 countries in the world. However, no overseas facilities had been established at the time.

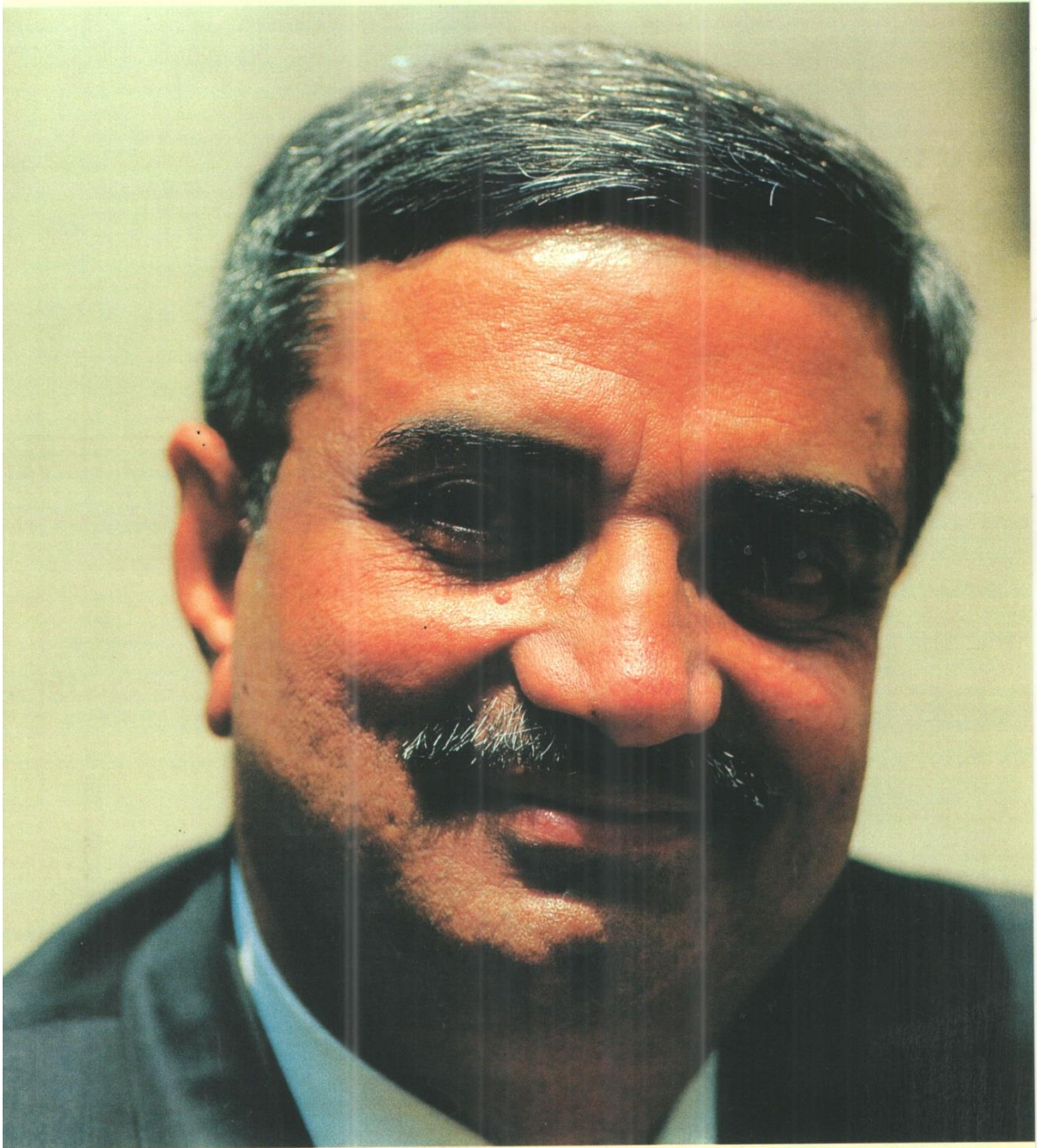
Mr. Jhunjhunwala led a team of executives to China to sign contract for raw material import. During the visit, they learned China had plenty of mineral resources at numerous locations and a larger than expected market. So, why not set up a plant in China?

Mishra along with some other executives visited China more in the next couple of years, having traveled to Hangzhou, Luoyang and Dalian to conduct investigations on the market and feasibility of establishing a plant.

Recalling the situation then, Mishra said with confidence, "ORIND should have established overseas facilities, even if not in China. The company had to go out of India to seek more opportunities. Economy of increased production would bring more profits. We used to only import raw materials from China, which was actually rather costly. Today, by making all our procurement in China, expenditure is drastically cut down."

ORIND eventually decided to establish its first overseas plant in China in 1994, after 6 years of deliberation and debates.

Many people had their doubts over the decision then.



FOCUS

Multinationals were all extremely cautious in stepping into China market as economic reforms had been underway only for 14 years till 1993. It was a time of water testing. "Rules were lacking on Chinese market as regulations for foreign firms were not fully developed. The situation was uncertain. Some people offered warnings that doing business in China was trouble seeking for myself." Mishra admitted to *Asian Capital*.

Nevertheless, Mishra had long made his determination. He packed up and bid farewell to his family to embark on the most adventurous journey of his life in China.

Things did not go very smoothly in the beginning. When the plant location was chosen and negotiations for land use completed, Mishra was told at the contract signing time that the property was actually owned by someone else. "The biggest problem we faced in the beginning was the confusion in land ownership, when you never knew if it belonged to Mr. X, Mr. Y or Mr. Z." Here, help from M/s Deacons, a global legal firm and especially their Partner, Mr Franki Cheung, came very handy.

Mishra is thankful to the assistance from the local government in dealing with the problem. "To build an overseas facility, one needs the support from the local government and society. The Yingkou government and people are friendly

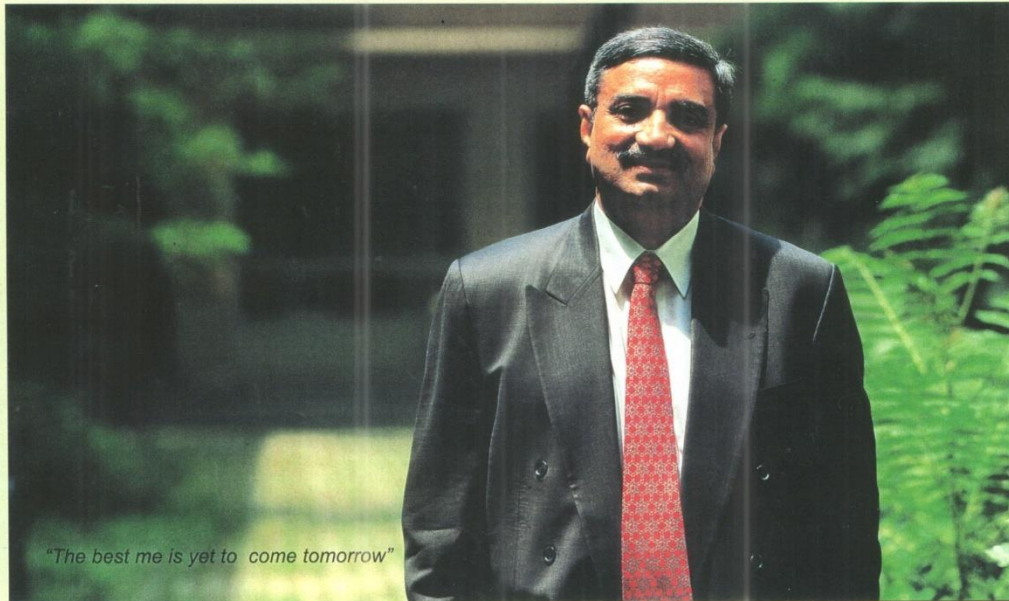
and have given us a big deal of help."

After a lot of ups and downs, construction of ORIND's China plant was finally underway. The location chosen is at the center of a magnesite field the Yingkou Technical & Development Zone at Bayuquan, in southern Liaoning province. The ORIND China plant was built up with US\$ 5 million in 1994, which became the first wholly owned foreign company in China. The factory made profits of RMB 150 million in the first year of operation in 1996 and over 95% of production value derived from export. ORIND China grew rapidly to be the largest refractory exporter in China only after two years of operation and occupies the same prime position till today.

Mishra smiled contentedly and said, "we have proved to them (critics) that we are successful ?C thanks to the continuous support from the local governments of Bayuquan/ Yingkou and my team."

Excellence Pursuing

Mishra was born in 1947 in an eastern Indian State named Bihar (Nauhatta, Saharsa). He has demonstrated extraordinary intelligence and talents since childhood, having been a top student from primary school on to university. After earning his bachelor degree in Metallurgical engineer-



"The best me is yet to come tomorrow"

ing at B.I.T. (Sindri), India, he began his professional career with ORIND India in 1970.

He started as a service engineer, responsible for design, application and proper use of refractories and helping customers with solutions. With his engineering training, he adapted to the job quickly and enhanced his knowledge of refractories by seizing every chance of further studies. Mr

Mishra went to Pittsburgh, USA for training in Refractories Research, Application and Marketing with Harbison Walker, the then No.1 in the world, in 1976. Mr Mishra conducted Market Research for 2 years on Refractories during 1979-81 with National Institute of Technical & Industrial Engineering (NITIE), Bombay, India and has since been recognized as a refractory specialist of the working team.

He has also taken quite a number of courses in Business Managements at various institutions, including Indian Institute of Managements. The course on Marketing Strategies and Global Business Scenario at Tata Management Development Center and orientation course on Tata Business Excellence Model, which is one of its kind in the management field globally, he attended later sowed the seed of globalization for ORIND in his heart.

"This year, my dream of studying at Harvard Business School has finally come true when I completed my graduation in Advanced Management Program (AMP). Look, that's me and my fellow students from all over the world." Mishra pointed to a blow-up photo on the wall in his office cheerfully. "I love to learn and improve myself continuously."

Although Mishra is a battle-toughened executive-specialist grown up at the forefront, his appetite for technological and managing expertise is insatiable. He declared, "The best me is yet to come tomorrow."

After 18 years working with ORIND, Mishra chose to



R. Mishra and his son Navin Mishra

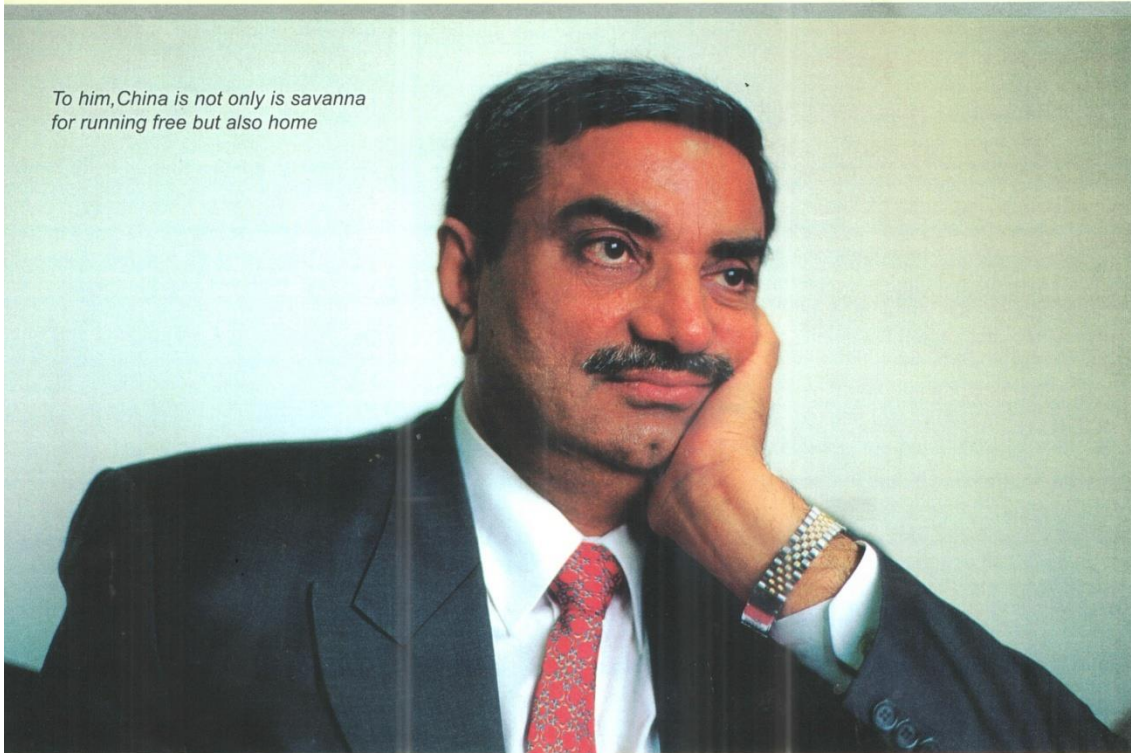
leave for Tata Refractories Limited in 1989. Tata house is India's largest business concern and to work for it is every Indian's dream, so it was for Mishra. "Tata is the best corporation in India and I wanted to draw the experience and improve myself and, in fact, serve that house well, but it was not to happen so".

In the new environment, Mishra worked his way up to Marketing General Manager of Tata Refractories Limited and Corporate Vice President. Nevertheless, it gradually dawned on him "while TATA is a very good company with well institutionalized systems, its main product is not refractories but in steel, automobiles and IT. Therefore, it would have been difficult to be the number one in the refractory field globally."

As Mishra was wondering what his next target would be, ORIND made the decision to move to China as the first step of overseas expansion. He had been making proposals of globalization to the ORIND Chairman before leaving, which were not adopted as the time was not ripe. Therefore, when the day finally arrived, Mishra came back to ORIND without any hesitation. "ORIND is more professional in refractories and what attracted me most was ORIND's (Mr Ravin Jhunjhunwala's) new global perspective and foresight. I would like to lead the best team with a global point of view. I knew I would meet with greater challenges but would have a larger room to act in."

The growth of ORIND China has proved the soundness of his choice, with the number of employees having grown from

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for running free but also home



60 to 565. "Before coming to China, nobody had much hope. But we have done it. Many multinational refractory manufacturers followed us to establish production facilities at Yingkou two years later and the number is growing every year. I am glad to have healthy competition - it helps you to sharpen yourselves in all respect and do something different as a team."

After the success in China, Mishra has been entrusted to establish plants in Australia and the United States. Today, ORIND has production facilities in China and USA; offices in Germany, Mexico, Canada, Trinidad & Tobago, South Korea, South Africa, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, Romania, Poland, Czech Republic, USA and, of course, many offices in India with some 100 customers in 50 countries all over the world. The ORIND refractories kingdom is on the rise. Mishra emphasized repeatedly, "The China facility is the most important overseas establishment of ORIND. We are looking for expanding our China capacity by twice. My goal is simple. It is to make ORIND Group the largest refractory manufacturer in Asia by the 2008 Beijing Olympics and ORIND China is the flagship Company."

The pursuit for excellence is always the reason for Mishra's ceaseless chase on the savanna.

Mishra firmly believes in team work and he simply notes Human Resource as the resource which should be nurtured with pleasure.

Mishra takes pride in his being known as a transparent and just Leader of high ethics and values. He is proud of the love and affection he gets from his colleagues and all team mates. He is proud to be it at Works or be it from his area friends, in spite of being noted as a tough guy.

He declares himself a lucky guy to get lot of supports and strengths from his customers and mainly from Ispat Corporate at London and from other Ispat plants. He is proud of being noted as the shadow of his Group Chairman.

Family, Dreams, China

"According to my experience, a family business employing professionals is a very good formula. A family owned company could be successful when it is run by professionals. It is safe as well as efficient." Mishra revealed to *Asian Capital*.

ORIND is such a company, according to Mishra. "While Mr. Ravin Jhunjhunwala is the owner and Chairman, the executive and managing team is composed of professionals from outside the family. That is a very important factor in the healthy development of ORIND."

Important members of Mishra's family all work with ORIND, his eldest son and two younger brothers being on managing jobs at ORIND China. He is undisturbed by views on family business from other people, "Our Chairman believes more family members bring about more loyalty to the company, which is beneficial. I know it is not allowed in many Chinese companies but different countries have different views and we like it this way."

Mishra said the biggest headache he's had in China was how to attract and keep good staffs. "We hope more professional engineers and MBAs would join us but most of them only want to work in big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, not Yingkou. Some of those who did show up would tell me at the end of the day of arrival, 'Sorry, I am leaving'. It is a big problem."

To deal with the problem, Mishra has raised the salaries for engineers and MBAs time and again, to a much higher level than that in India and other Chinese cities. Mishra said, "Many multinationals come to China for the low labor cost whereas we came for resources of market, energy, society and productivity. Therefore, we choose to pay more to good employees as long as they can improve the productivity."

Mishra did not deny the fact that communication with family members could run into problems at work. "I would have my opinion toward the way of work of my son. But I am very cautious on such occasions and try to keep an open mind in communicating. I do my best to follow company procedures through transparent systems."

Mishra said, smiling at his first-born son Navin standing beside him, "He is one of the managing executives of our China plant but does not report to me directly. He has his own superiors in the company. You know, sometimes it is indeed hard to switch between the roles of director and father. My choice is to stay away from my son as far as possible. That makes things easier for him."

Most of Mishra's family lives in Beijing. "I am interested in buying a house in Beijing to contain all my big family in it and settle down formally." It's a lovely place of friendly people all around."

Further more, the 57-year-old Mishra has undertaken

to learn Chinese. One or two nights' studying each week offers him a sense of self-fulfillment. He is not scared by the allegedly most difficult language in world and said, "I like to study Chinese. My brother Satish, who is General Manager-Marketing, can speak fluent Chinese. My another brother, Hem also speaks Chinese. My daughter-in-law, Kamini speaks good Chinese. We have a very good environment for learning Chinese at home." Mishra took out a notebook as he was talking and showed the Chinese characters and phonetic signs in it. "I am a serious learner and I hope I will be able to speak Chinese with my business partners soon.", a hearty laughter broke out as he was making the statement.

In his eyes, the Indian gentleman is full of confidence and hope. To him, China is not only a savanna for running free but also home.

Mishra Q&A

Competition

I love healthy competition and challenges, as competition makes you sharper and more responsible.

Excellence

I love to be the best as a team leader. I hope what I do is the most professional and a high-value example.

China

I have been to 93 countries and visited some places hundred times. China is the best love of my family and mine. Our future is in China. Yingkou is my second love after India.

Wife

My wife, Indu is the source of my inspirations and confidence. She is both my love and friend. She loves Beijing/China more than me.

Sports

I love all kinds of sports. Volley ball is my favorite game and I am pretty good at it.

Do you think yourself a successful entrepreneur?

Yes, very! Ha ha-credit to my customers, boss, colleagues and family members.