

FIL: Making India's Agri, Health and Tourism Sectors Sustainable, Inclusive and Futuristic

May 6, 2024

A millennial youth Mr. Syed Junaid Altaf, Promotor and Group Director - FIL Industries Private Limited epitomises global thinking, guided by the ethos that drives sustainable growth and success across diverse verticals of the conglomerate. As the third generation, he uploads the legacy of the family business with aplomb while serving as a strong contributor to India's economic strength.

What have you brought to the table regarding strategies, expansion and modern technology to build a sustainable value chain from farm to the end experience of customers?

At FIL Industries we take immense pride in serving as an enabler in bridging the gap between the farmer and the consumer. Over the last three decades, we have significantly enhanced our strategy and consolidated our offerings. As the new generation at the helm, we are now adopting an all-encompassing approach while building a sustainable value chain to augment the agricultural ecosystem. We are doing this by leveraging modern technology and introducing innovative solutions customised to Indian requirements. This has been possible through the expansion of operations as well as strategic national and international partnerships such as Dalival from France and Kimitec Group from Spain, among others.

Our foray into bio molecules, stone fruit nurseries and agro-cluster management has allowed for reinvention of the region's value chain and transformation of fruit growing areas.

We are also looking at introducing interventions like IoT-based technology, first parametric apple crop insurance and nutrient management. I believe that such investments are the need of the hour to pave the way for a resilient and sustainable horticulture industry in India.

How conducive is the Indian market and economy to support the youth in start-ups, and as a proactive member of various business bodies what are your initiatives for the youth, especially in the states that you operate?

Today, the Indian market and economy is a fertile landscape for entrepreneurship, especially for the youth. Government support has been crucial in stimulating a business-friendly environment for startups to flourish by augmenting the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) mechanisms. These include simplifying the startup registration process, offering tax exemptions, providing funding opportunities through government schemes, facilitating access to networks and mentors, and encouraging innovation through research and development initiatives.

At FIL Industries, we have prioritised youth empowerment via local internships and training programmes in collaboration with regional colleges and universities. We also provide hands-on experience and skill development, which ultimately leads to a full-time employment opportunity.

As proactive members of numerous apex industry associations, our initiatives are aimed at facilitating mentorship, enabling access to resources and networking opportunities, all directed towards nurturing the next generation of business leaders. By investing in the youth, we contribute to India's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

According to you, what is the mantra of success, and how much do you owe to your family and their golden wisdom in making you a responsible successor and entrepreneur?

Our guiding principle is straightforward yet compelling: embrace global thinking, implement locally and design innovations to suit the local environment and conditions, maximising their effectiveness. This ethos guides my endeavours as I strive to uphold my family legacy and drive sustainable growth across diverse verticals.

Growing up in a family deeply rooted in business I've imbibed invaluable lessons from my grandfather, father, and uncle who have been my mentors while they built and expanded the business. Their golden wisdom, my formal education and practical exposure since childhood, has honed my skills and instilled the sense of entrepreneurial acumen.

I owe immense gratitude to my family for the strong foundation. I intend to build on this legacy and diversify our business across multiple verticals, continuing our growth and success.

India is gifted with natural abundance and beauty, so as a youth, what is your vision for transforming India into a global business and tourism hub and efforts towards achieving it?

My vision for transforming India into a global business and tourism hub revolves around leveraging India's vibrant culture, rich mountainous and diverse landscapes. This is evident in our sustainable mobility and tourism infrastructure businesses in collaboration with the world's best. Our flagship project Skyview by Emyrean at Patnitop operational since September 2019 is testimony to this and the upcoming Dehradun-Mussoorie ropeway and Yamunotri aerial ropeway projects will further consolidate our positioning.

My efforts are directed towards fostering sustainable development, promoting entrepreneurship, and enhancing infrastructure. Hopefully this will create a conducive environment for businesses to thrive and for tourists to experience the wonders of India.

Personally, what inspires you to set new milestones, what are your hobbies and favourite holiday spots?

What inspires me to set new milestones is the opportunity to make a meaningful impact and contribute positively to the world around me. Whether it's leveraging technology, fostering innovation or empowering others, the prospect of creating positive change drives me forward.

As for hobbies, I enjoy reading mostly non-fiction or books on business strategy, politics and international affairs, and anthropology. I am a fan of writers such as Peter Hopkirk, Simon Sinek, Siddhartha Mukherjee, Vikram Seth and Tara Westover to name a few.

While work takes me on travels across the world, I have travelled to 40 + countries and my favourite destinations are Vienna, Grenoble and Courchevel.

One of my most memorable travel experiences was to Longyearbyen/Svalbard in Norway, one of the northernmost habitations in the world, which I visited during polar night.
