

Business Today

The most powerful women in Business

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SHEKHAR GHOSH



VINITA SINGHANIA
Chairperson and MD, JK Lakshmi Cement

WHY SHE MATTERS

In 2016/17, JKLC posted a net profit of ₹82 crore, recovering sharply from the dip of the previous year

Cementing Success

Though real estate, cement's main consumer, is in the doldrums, Vinita has ensured her company thrives.

By CHANCHAL PAL CHAUHAN

For the first 16 years after my marriage, I was a full-time housewife," says Vinita Singhania. It was still possible to mistake her for one as she sat on a couch during her meeting with *Business Today*, clad in a peach-coloured sari with large yellow floral prints, enquiring of family members whether the grandchildren were back from school. But minutes later, when the telephone rang, her transformation was instant. She sought a quick update from the caller on the movement of cement consignments from JK Lakshmi Cement's (JKLC) Rajasthan plant to Maharashtra, along with data on whether turnaround time had reduced with the implementation of the goods and services tax (GST).

Singhania, 65, Managing Director of JKLC since August 2006, the first woman CEO of a major cement company, has increased its turnover from a mere ₹100 crore in 1989 – when she took charge of it following the untimely death of her husband, Sripati Singhania – to nearly ₹3,000 crore, and its capacity from 0.5 million tonne per annum (MTPA) to 12.6 MTPA. The year 2015/16 was a dreadful one for the industry, with JKLC's net profit dropping to a mere ₹6.82 crore, but she has brought about a sharp recovery in 2016/17 with net profit rising to ₹82 crore, a 1,100 per cent increase. ♦