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The Business Frontier:
India's Most Visionary Leaders 2026

Umar Balwa

Managing Director

Sealmatic India Ltd

**"UMAR BALWA:
SHAPING THE FUTURE OF MECHANICAL SEALS"**

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As the market shifts toward greater efficiency and sustainability, companies are increasingly collaborating to drive the energy transition. To explore how these changes are reshaping the sector, we sat down with Umar Balwa, Managing Director of Sealmatic, to discuss his insights on the mechanical seal industry and the future of the market.

Q: Could you provide a brief overview of your background and your entry into the mechanical seal industry?

My journey into the mechanical seals industry began entirely by chance. After graduating from the University of Bombay in 1988, I was eager to chart my own path away from our family's real estate and hospitality roots. My ambition was to establish a ready-made garment manufacturing unit. At the time, Bombay was a booming export hub for European and American fashion, and the prospects were thrilling. Initially, my father offered his encouragement. However, he abruptly changed his mind. Despite weeks of pleading and reasoning, I could not sway him. Feeling dejected, betrayed, and deeply disappointed, I retreated into weeks of brooding.

Meanwhile, my older brother, Hussein Balwa, was launching a modest enterprise called A K Engineering—named after our father, Abdul Karim

Balwa. The business was to establish manufacturing of mechanical seals; a highly technical industry I knew absolutely nothing about.

My turning point came on May 18, 1989. I was sitting idle, a frustratingly common routine at the time. Because I had no formal role, my family viewed me as unproductive, often assigning me menial tasks. That afternoon, my father and brothers delivered a diktat: I was to report to A K Engineering the following morning at 9:00 AM sharp.

The traditional Indian family structure offers immense security, but it demands absolute compliance. Once a patriarch speaks, his word is cast in stone. I had no choice but to accept this gritty, unglamorous reality, watching my dreams of the vibrant fashion textile industry slip away.

Instead of the fashion elite and glamorous models I had envisioned, my reality was a sharp 9:00 AM clock-in at A K Engineering the very next day. My journey into the world of mechanical seals officially began there on May 19, 1989.

Post this event, the turning point came when everything changed on the misty, overcast morning of November 5, 1993, as Lufthansa Flight 98 from Frankfurt circled

Munich, waiting for air traffic control to clear us for landing. Glued to the window, I gazed at the German landscape with childlike wonder. The manicured fields resembled a patchwork of vibrant green carpets, and the picturesque houses looked like they had leapt straight out of a storybook. From above, Munich looked like heaven, and I was just moments away from stepping into it.

The city looked so beautifully organized that it felt as though God had fashioned it in a moment of pure creative genius. Beaming with joy, I couldn't wait to step onto European soil—a land steeped in history, beauty, and mystery. When the flight finally landed, I expected a polite greeting and a warm "Guten Morgen" from the immigration officer. As is customary, he asked for the purpose of my visit. I proudly announced that I was here to visit Feodor Burgmann Dichtungswerke GmbH & Co KG.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your work?

Our greatest asset, without a doubt, our people. As a global company with a diverse portfolio, I am constantly amazed by the deep knowledge, customer passion, and talent of every single SealMagician. This pride will only deepen over time. I thrive on watching teams succeed in challenging environments. It is incredibly rewarding to

see our groups make progress toward their goals—whether that means improving safety performance, driving technological innovation, or delivering large customer orders. Celebrating these wins and supporting our teams' ongoing development is the most fulfilling part of my role.

Q: Could you provide an update on the upcoming Middle East service centres?

I am highly pleased with the timing of our decision to join forces with our Middle Eastern partners, particularly in the UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. At Sealmatic, we are executing key initiatives to support our 3D strategy of Dedication, Discipline, and Devotion. I am excited to integrate the Sealmatic team and its offerings into our long-term Middle Eastern vision.

Q: How will this service centres in the Middle East impact the industry?

Establishing strong partnerships and service centres in the Middle East allows Sealmatic to leverage its unique differentiators to drive collective growth. With a robust presence in critical sectors like oil and gas, refining, and petrochemicals, we offer a highly efficient product portfolio tailored to the region. I am confident that our





deeply rooted heritage and technical expertise will deliver winning outcomes for our customers. By leaning into our '3D strategy,' our teams are fully equipped to serve our customers better, advance our regional footprint, and take Sealmatic to new heights.

Q: How is Sealmatic paving a way for efficient processes?

At Sealmatic, paving the way for efficient processes means aligning our entire ecosystem with our core 3D strategy. Whether developing new solutions or forging strategic partnerships, our goal is to help customers seamlessly navigate the energy transition. We achieve this by optimizing traditional energy infrastructures—such as oil & gas, refining, and petrochemicals—while simultaneously building the future. A dedicated Sealmatic team is already capturing high-growth opportunities in clean energy tech, including CCUS, green hydrogen, and recyclable plastics. As global industries accelerate their decarbonisation efforts, our strategic path ensures we are perfectly positioned to meet the demand. We expect an exponential increase in bookings over the coming years,

growing in lockstep with our customers as their trusted transition partner.

Q. How is India's mechanical seal market evolving, and what are the primary macro drivers fuelling its growth?

For five decades, international players have led the mechanical seal market in India due to the high-precision design and manufacturing capabilities required. While these advanced production techniques were missing during the industry's infancy, dramatic capabilities improvements have since enabled the adoption of state-of-the-art sealing technology across diverse sectors, including oil and gas, aerospace, pharmaceuticals, and power generation. Because mechanical seals are critical for preventing the leakage of hazardous materials into the environment, increasingly strict global environmental regulations now mandate their use on all rotary equipment.

Driven by these demands, the global market has surged from just USD 300 million in the early 1980s to USD 4.3 billion today. Moving forward, the expansion of core

economic sectors—such as oil & gas, refining, petrochemical, power (nuclear & thermal), fertilizers, aerospace, defence etc—will remain the primary catalyst for the industry's continued growth.

Q. What are the major expectations of customer organizations from players in this space? How do you meet their expectations?

In the mechanical seal industry, customers demand unrivalled reliability, deep application expertise, and rapid after-sales service. Because this field requires a proven track record, precise application-specific design is paramount. Every mechanical seal we produce is tailor-made to meet unique customer specifications. As the premier domestic manufacturer, we have invested heavily in R&D, design, quality control, and production. Our dedicated team of 46 engineers work exclusively on custom global solutions. Notably, we are the only Indian mechanical seal company to hold API Q1, ATEX, ISO 19443, ISO 29001, ISO 3834 and EU FDA certifications, and the only domestic peer utilizing FEA

and CFD for advanced design and development. Backed by over 37 years of experience, we leverage a massive database of application knowledge, troubleshooting, and failure analysis to guarantee our customers with most reliable sealing solutions.

Q. How is your company positioned in this segment?

We are one of the global market leaders in mechanical seals, trusted by core industrial sectors worldwide. Our high-performance products are exported to over 63 countries, matching the quality and reliability of the industry's biggest names. Domestically, our offerings are second to none. We provide an end-to-end global service package, seamless seal selection, expert installation, and comprehensive on-site personnel training. Our deep knowledge and application-based solutions for critical equipment make us the preferred vendor for complex international projects.

Q. What are the major factors that set you apart from other players in this segment?



The mechanical seal industry is highly competitive, demanding significant capital, time, and expertise to excel. Since our founding in 2011, Sealmatic has consciously designed its infrastructure to meet rigorous global benchmarks. We have integrated advanced hardware and software, implemented stringent international standards, and built a highly trained engineering team. To date, we have hosted over 150 international customer audits, with visitors consistently classifying our plant as a world-class, state-of-the-art facility.

While we focus on global benchmarks rather than local comparisons, Sealmatic has outpaced domestic competition. We hold an unparalleled compliance portfolio in India, including elite certifications like API Q1, ATEX, ISO 19443, ISO 29001, ISO 3834 and FDA. Our R&D investments include advanced test rigs meeting API 682 standards, including high speed test rigs for dry gas seals—an infrastructure investment that often exceeds the valuation of smaller competitors. Furthermore, we are the only Indian manufacturer in our domain to offer in-house FEA and CFD capabilities. Backed by proprietary engineering tools like our Mechanical Seal Dictionary (MSD), Seal Selection Guide (SSG), and Application Know-How (AKH), Sealmatic has firmly established itself as a globally respected leader in high-quality sealing technology.

Q. How has the company been proving itself with its heavy-duty mechanical seals that offer innovative and tailor-made sealing solutions? Tell us with respect to your various product offerings.

Mechanical seal engineering demands deep application expertise acquired through decades of field experience. For over 37 years, we have engineered custom sealing solutions for the industry's most complex and hazardous environments. We specialise in designing, manufacturing, and installing heavy-duty mechanical seals for pumps, compressors, agitators, and other rotary equipment.

Our niche products are purpose-built to withstand extreme operating conditions, including pressures exceeding 150 kg/cm², temperatures above 450°C, high-slurry environments, and high-viscosity media. Leveraging a proprietary, 37-year data bank, we match your demanding operational parameters with proven historical performance. We never compromise on metallurgy. We construct our seals using premium raw materials imported exclusively from Germany, the USA, and the UK. Our heavy-duty seals deliver reliable performance across critical sectors, including oil and

gas, offshore platforms, pipeline booster pumps, heavy-duty slurry handling, high-pressure chemical agitation, and refinery processes.

Q: In a few words how would you sum up your future plans for Sealmatic?

I would say in a short summary about my future plans with a bold vision: "Do not think outside the box — break the box!". My strategic roadmap, titled "Sealmatic Beyond 2030," focuses on transforming the company into a dominant global player and achieving the following key milestones: Global Recognition: I aspire for Sealmatic to be recognized as the number four mechanical seal company globally. Market Share Targets: A specific goal is to capture a 15% market share of the anticipated 22,500 new API mechanical seals required by oil and gas sector by 2035. Expansion into Profitable Segments: Shifting focus toward high-margin end-user and aftermarket (O&M) business, which we expect to enter a "golden period" starting in FY 2028 as current project installations begin requiring maintenance. Geographic Footprint: Establishing a physical presence with sales and service centres on every continent, with immediate focuses on the Middle East, Europe, and the USA. Technological Leadership: Continuous investment in R&D for advanced products like dry gas seals and smart seals (IoT-enabled) to maintain a competitive edge in critical applications like nuclear and defense.

"It has been truly inspiring to hear the journey of Sealmatic over the past 15 years. From a humble beginning to becoming a leader in the sealing technology, the growth is a testament to the dedication of everyone here. Thank you for sharing these memories. It's clear that the foundation built is solid, and the future is bright." With the vision you've shared, I have no doubt that the next 15 years will be even more impactful. Here's to the future of Sealmatic!"

Thank you, for taking me through this journey of incredible insights. Fifteen years is just the beginning. To everyone who has been part of this journey, thank you. It's remarkable to see how far we've come, but it's even more exciting to as to where we are going. Fifteen years is just the beginning. Thank you for getting this chance of highlighting the passion, resilience, and camaraderie that has defined these 15 years. This anniversary belongs to the whole team, and we look forward to celebrating many more milestones together."

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