

So you want to own a

Car wash

A car wash looks simple. Count the cars, multiply by ₹300, and the back of a parking bill says ₹23 lakh a year. J follows every real cost: the plot, the deposit, the machines, the licences, the man in the basement, three water bans in three years, and what American chains get right and wrong.

THE REEL'S PROMISE

₹23 lakh a year

25 cars × ₹300 × 26 days × 12 months = ₹23 lakh a year, from soap and water.

WHAT J DID NOT KNOW YET

The flaw

The man in the basement washes the same car for ₹8–17, before 9 a.m., with no rent, no staff and no GST.

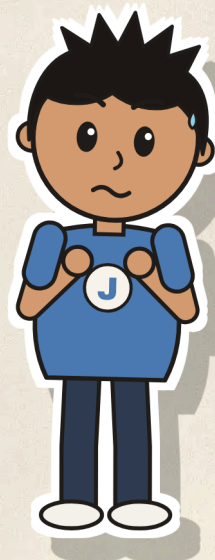
THE REAL BILL

25 cars × ₹300	₹7,500/day
× 26 days × 12	₹23.4 lakh
Cars already taken	most
Water bans	3 in 3 years

Worst
month

Below

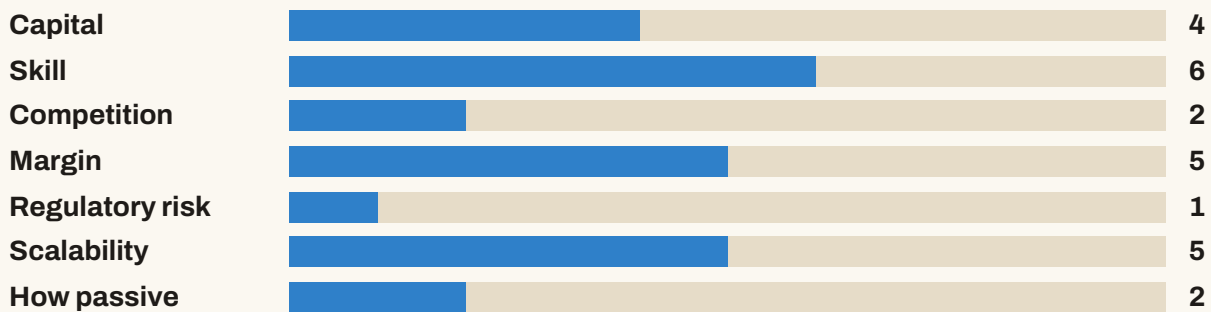
₹0



CHAPTERS • 29:59

- 0:00 Meet J
- 0:41 Before we start
- 0:55 The number on the back of a bill
- 3:42 There is no such thing as a car wash
- 5:25 The corner plot
- 7:08 The ladder of machines
- 9:06 The file nobody shows you
- 10:27 The man in the basement
- 13:43 What the customer's eyes believe
- 14:35 The hidden cost
- 17:28 What survives the flight
- 20:27 Steam against the machine
- 23:20 The fifth car wash
- 25:47 Two years, and the scorecard
- 28:20 Back to the bill
- 29:14 Next stop: J's Wall

The scorecard: **25/70**



Ten points each, higher is better. Season average per question: Capital 5.4 • Skill 4.6 • Competition 2.6 • Margin 3.6 • Regulatory risk 2.6 • Scalability 5.6 • How passive 2.6.

Two years, run two ways **ILLUSTRATION**

The good version

20–25 cars a day, 2–3 fleet contracts, coatings become the biggest line: ₹5–7 lakh profit a year, payback in 18–24 months.

The realistic version

A summer water restriction, the basement man keeps his regulars, the senior boy leaves: 15–18 cars a day, ₹2–3 lakh a year, payback 3–4 years.

J's checklist before you start

1. Count the cars near you that nobody already washes – not all the cars near you.
2. Ask for the deposit in writing before you love the plot: 6–12 months of rent is common.
3. Check the local water board's orders for the last three summers.
4. Price the detailing and coating menu, not just the ₹300 wash – that is where the margin sits.
5. Plan for the day your senior washer leaves with his customers.

J's Wall after 5 stops

#1	Exporting	31/70
#2	Importing from China	28/70
#3	Selling abroad	27/70
#4	Car wash	25/70
#5	Cloud kitchen	24/70

Where the numbers come from

BWSSB drinking-water ban, March 2024 (The News Minute):
<https://www.thenewsminute.com/karnataka/bengaluru-bwssb-bans-drinking-water-usage-for-car-washing-gardening-construction>

BWSSB order, February 2025 (The News Minute):
<https://www.thenewsminute.com/karnataka/rs-5000-fine-for-wasting-drinking-water-bwssb-tightens-rules-ahead-of-summer>

BWSSB order, July 2026, up to 50% supply cut (Deccan Chronicle): <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/southern-states/karnataka/bengaluru-water-board-bans-drinking-water-use-for-pools-rs-5000-fine-for-violations-1968539>

Delhi ₹2,000 water-wastage penalty, May 2024 (Deccan Herald): <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/delhi/delhi-govt-imposes-rs-2000-penalty-on-water-wastage-3043429>

Hyderabad ₹10,000 fine, Banjara Hills, Nov 2025 (Siasat): <https://www.siasat.com/man-fined-rs-10k-for-washing-car-with-drinking-water-in-banjara-hills-3300943/>

"Water scarcity threatens city's car wash business", The Hindu Bangalore, March 2024:
<https://www.pressreader.com/india/the-hindu-bangalore-9WW1/20240331/281586655606711>

Gurugram and Sohna car-wash units, Hindustan Times, April 2022: <https://www.pressreader.com/india/hindustan-times-chandigarh/20220423/281784222648873>

Punjab Pollution Control Board, 150–200 litres per vehicle, 2018 (The Tribune):
<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/punjab/ppcb-issues-notice-to-service-stations-over-water-misuse-617985>

The Boilers Act, 2025:
<https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/21395/1/A2025-12.pdf>

Central Ground Water Authority guidelines, 24 September 2020 (Ministry of Jal Shakti)

Clean India Journal, fuel-station car washes, Nov 2025:
<https://cleanindiajournal.com/car-wash-facilities-at-fuel-stations/>

Mister Car Wash Q4 and FY2025 results:
<https://ir.mistercarwash.com/news-releases/news-release-details/mister-car-wash-announces-fourth-quarter-and-full-year-2025>

Zips Car Wash Chapter 11:
<https://chapter11cases.com/blogs/news/zips-car-wash-files-chapter-11-with-plan-to-reduce-debt-by-279-million>

Driven Brands car wash sale:
<https://investors.drivenbrands.com/news-and-events/news/news-details/2025/Driven-Brands-Announces-Agreement-to-Divest-U.S.-Car-Wash-Business-for-385-Million/default.aspx>

Video quoted: "I Spent \$225,000 at a Self Serve Car Wash, Now it Makes me \$1,000/day" (StephentheInvestor):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3u1lBswolc>

Owner rates per month (HSR Layout, Koramangala, Thane) are from an old Team-BHP owners' thread and are shown as the shape of a rate, not current prices. Equipment prices are typical published ranges from Indian suppliers and change often.

Animation, narration and editing: Learn Business with J. Narration voice is AI-generated. Music composed for this channel.

MUSIC

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