

Touch of class

Nikai Group UAE chairman Paras Shahdadpuri talks about his path to success.

With practical wisdom and maturity gained through his diplomatic stint and inspired by his community's commercial instinct, Paras Shahdadpuri, chairman of Nikai Group, UAE, has successfully emerged as an enterprising genius setting milestones in the business world as also the community services sector in his host land. While earning great eminence by developing Nikai as a major brand in electronics and home appliances and winning the trust of 15 million consumers in the Middle East region, he also enjoys the appellation of 'MR. RELIABLE' suggesting reliability of his company's products.

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Mr Reliable: Paras Shahdadpuri received the prestigious Bharat Shiromani Award in 2005.

The greatness of a man irrespective of his venturing domain lies in his high moral character, resolute integrity, strong will power and fortitude. A man possessed with such rare attributes has no hesitation to embrace the myriad challenges as an inevitable part of life's experiences that enable him to fly like eagles, attaining greater heights of heroic successes in dream objectives. The adventurous journey of landmark successes of Paras Shahdadpuri, the chairman of Nikai Group of Companies, UAE, is found revolving on his dauntless courage, pragmatic vision, deep conviction in human possibilities and endless desire to face newer challenges that constantly urged him to take detour from a highly paid glamorous and prestigious service in the Indian government to financially lucrative domain i.e. business enterprise. His fast track strides towards the landmark success became possible due to the highly salubrious business atmosphere of the UAE which has always been encouraging for the traders, and the Emirate and entrepreneurs are often found flourishing together harmoniously. In such a favourable biz ambience, only the sky came to be his limit.

With Shahdadpuri's sharp business

acumen, concerted efforts and unflinching honesty, the Nikai with its manifold business ventures, has developed into a major brand in the Mid-East region offering over 400 electronic and household appliances, winning the trust of 15 million consumers in over 60 countries; he has earned the consumers' trust with the appellation of 'MR. RELIABLE' in the commercial domain, and received the prestigious 'Bharat Shiromani Award 2005' in recognition of his laudable contributions and achievements as a prominent NRI. Shahdadpuri's foray into business world is tantamount to his homecoming because he served with the Indian Foreign Service despite being a Sindhi which is predominantly a business community by traditions. He admits frankly: "I belong to the Sindhi ethnicity and I indeed then realized the widely held belief that business runs in the blood veins of the Sindhis, although it got invoked in me only in my 40's!!"

Born in Sindh (now a state of Pakistan) before India's partition in 1947, Shahdadpuri hails from an educated and cultured family. His family migrated to Delhi where he grew

up and pursued his studies. His father was a senior health officer who managed to provide good education to his children. It was his parents' thrust on education, and of course, his slogging on studies that Shahdadpuri excelled in all his examinations, even qualifying for the Indian Foreign Service (IFS).

After joining the IFS, Shahdadpuri served as a diplomat in Indian missions in various countries such as Beijing (China), Washington DC (USA), Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) and Tripoli (Libya). By virtue of such coveted job and prestigious position, Shahdadpuri used to rub shoulders with decision-makers, diplomats and other bigwigs in the government. While in his 40s, he was offered a posting in Helsinki (Finland). However, he turned it down, and instead, opted for Tripoli. During his stay in Libya, he nurtured an idea of doing something of his own and build something from the scratch that may have a huge impact on people. He acquaints: "It was during my tenure in Libya as a diplomat that I realized that I was cut out for something different in life. I was 40 and I felt it was an opportune moment to redirect



the course of my life path". Why he opted to go for business while posted in Libya, he explains: "I realized my own potential while in Libya when I handled the economic and commercial portfolio. Working in bureaucracy has its own handicaps, your efforts and initiatives do not always come to fruition. This at times leaves you with a sense of dissatisfaction, and perhaps frustration..."

Though Shahdarpuri was going to enter a new domain, the instinctive spook of quitting a highly respectable and well-paid job made him oscillate at least for a while. But since he had already made up his mind to move ahead for business, he was not the person to retreat. He apprises: "Business was an alien field for me. None of my immediate family had dared to foray into this field. There were no siblings I could seek guidance from". However, his spill over the business was too strong to be resisted. "Challenge is my adrenaline", he asserts with a heroic urge to venture into the new domain of commercial enterprise despite its uncertainties and risks.

The real challenge lay in his irresistible desire for a drastic change in the pattern of

his career pursuit. He with his family members had already suffered the agonies of displacement following the country's partition in 1947 and faced the challenging situations quite bravely. He was therefore instinctively prepared to meet the challenges, however horrific they might be. In fact, it was his gene pool that ignited the fighter in him, and he was resolute in his determination to go for an awful break, joining a business career in preference to continuing as a dignified public servant. At the age of forty while working at the Indian Mission abroad, Shahdarpuri stood as a completely disillusioned man having an insight into the potentialities of his own self if allowed to work beyond the ambit of the government regulated assignment, however prestigious it might be in status. It had been this realization that forced him to adopt a track of life that offered him enormous opportunities to fulfill his dream objectives with excellence and distinct recognition. Besides, the moral support to his venturing spirit as provided by his parents gave a high boost to his decision for the challenging break.

When Shahdarpuri's two distinct career options are taken into account, his sensibility is found evolving consistently based on his assignments and experiences. His work experience in the Indian Foreign Service helped him a lot to decide about his future. He admits thus: "It (the Indian Foreign Service) provided me enormous opportunity to get exposed to the varied culture, political and economic systems of different countries. The Indian Foreign Service taught me to deal with different nationalities, to understand their psyches, the local nuances, the working constraints etc... These perhaps trained me to face the challenges, and successfully convert these challenges into opportunities." The honesty with which he admits the truth is the essence of his personal character, and which is the key to his laudable successes in his endeavors. Shahdarpuri was fully aware of the fact that the path of business career was not laid with roses and that there were always umpteen challenges and obstacles. But still he opted for this challenging path mainly on the strength of his conviction born out of his spiritual as well as intellectual qualities that characterize his iconic personality. ■