

# ELECTRIC DREAMS

*Paras Shahdadpuri* was close to 50 when he gave up a career in diplomacy to launch his own venture. Nikai Group is now one of the largest electronics suppliers in the GCC and the septuagenarian is worth at least \$770m. But he is not finished yet, with new markets and new sectors to conquer

BY COURTNEY TRENWITH

**T**HERE IS A SAYING that goes, 'in the right place at the right time.' Paras Shahdadpuri is perhaps the epitome of such luck. The Indian was edging towards his 50th birthday when he decided to risk all and quit a long-term diplomatic career to plunge into the gritty world of business.

He intended to import pre-branded electronics and sell them at a profit, in what could have created a reasonable family business. But a Japanese supplier had a different idea.

"When I started trading, I went to Japan for my first big order — and big order meant two containers [compared to] today where we import thousands of containers — and the Japanese suppliers told me 'why don't you buy this in your own brand'," Shahdadpuri says, referring to the 1990s.

"I took this idea back to the hotel — honestly I couldn't afford big hotels at the time; I had a manager from the company with me and we were sharing my room.

"This was working on my mind, I was tossing and

**"I still remember that we made our logo on a paper napkin, sitting at the breakfast table"**

**1988**

The year in which Paras Shahdadpuri started the Nikai Group in Dubai.

