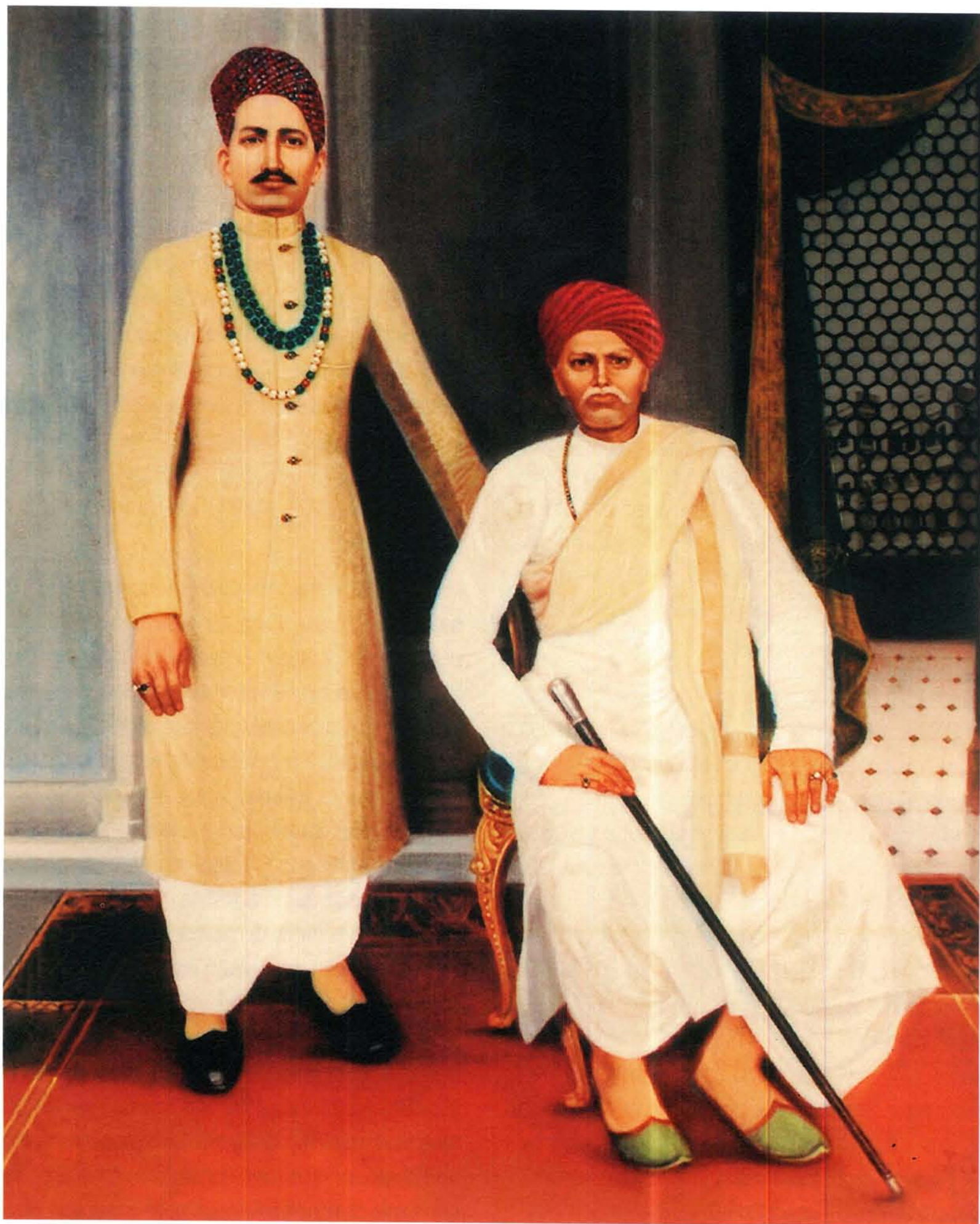


THE MARWARI HERITAGE



D.K. TAKNET



Above: A portrait of Kesarimal and Ghisilal Kothari. The Kothari odyssey began in 1905, when the KGK group, named after Navrattan Kothari's grandfather, the late Kesarimal, and his father, Ghisilal Kothari, laid the foundation of the business by trading in emeralds, rubies and sapphires in Rangoon, Burma.

Facing page (from left to right): Sandeep Kothari, Vinay Kothari, Navrattan Kothari, Prakash Kothari and Prashant Kothari. Prakash and Vinay Kothari, younger brothers of N.R. Kothari, work closely with him.

NAVRATTAN KOTHARI: THE DISTINGUISHED JEWELLER

With over 100 years of experience in gems, diamonds and jewellery, the Kotharis are not merely looked upon as a business enterprise but leaders in the gems and jewellery industry. More importantly, good corporate citizenship is part of the group's DNA and it is trusted for its adherence to strong values and business ethics. The Kothari Group is amongst the largest distributors of coloured gemstones, diamonds and diamond-studded jewellery in the world, and their success story defines the Marwari way of business. Integrating the development of technology in their trade, they are patronised by both Indian royalty and the nation's prominent families due to the exquisite diamond jewellery that they create.

The Kothari narrative began in 1905, when the KGK group, named after Navrattan Kothari's grandfather, the late Kesarimal, and his father, Ghisilal Kothari, laid the foundation of the business by trading in emeralds, rubies and sapphires in Rangoon, Burma. Today, under the able leadership of its Chairman, Navrattan Kothari, together with his two younger brothers Vinay Kothari and Prakash Kothari, the group has become the leading establishment in the gems and jewels industry worldwide.

The year 1969 marked a new beginning for the KGK group – it was the year when Navrattan Kothari, popularly known as NRK, went to Bombay at the young age of 27, to expand the family business by entering the diamond industry. 'There are no shortcuts to success. Stay committed and success will follow,' reiterates the patriarch of the Kothari clan. Under his outstanding leadership, the KGK group became the first



organisation from Rajasthan to be a sight-holder with the Diamond Trading Company, London (now known as De Beers), in 1997, whereby the group started sourcing rough diamonds directly from the mining company. KGK is one among 84 other sight-holders of the prestigious De Beers group across the globe which receives direct supply of rough diamonds from Botswana and south Africa. In 2004, the group became a client of Alrosa, a large diamond-mining company in Russia, and now holds the unique distinction of having three long-term supply contracts with them. The group was recently confirmed for the Rio Tinto Diamond-Select Diamontaire status, beginning from 2015. Today the group has access to all major diamond-mining companies for the supply of rough diamonds – a proud achievement indeed.

In 2012, the Lifetime Achievement Award was accorded by Retail Jeweller India to NRK. The group's efforts in promoting the gems and jewellery trade have been recognised by the government of India as well as the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC). KGK has won many awards for being the highest exporter of precious stones for eight consecutive



Top: A family portrait of the three generations of the Kotharis. Anila and Navrattan Kothari, the backbone of the family, are responsible for the 'togetherness' that marks this family.

Above: Standing, from left to right: Prashant Kothari, Sandeep Kothari, Prakash Kothari, Navrattan Kothari, Vinay Kothari, Surendra Kothari, Sanjay Kothari.

Seated, from left to right: Raveena Kothari, Preeti Kothari, Sheela Kothari, Anila Kothari, Vandana Kothari, Ritu Kothari and Manju Kothari.

One of the largest exporters of gemstones, diamonds and diamond-studded jewellery in the world, the Kotharis and their success story is indeed unique. With more than 100 years of experience in diamonds and jewellery, they are looked upon as more than just a business enterprise. Despite the development of technology in the trade, the Kotharis have managed to keep their traditional values and ethics intact. The royal and prominent families of India have patronised them and have been perpetually charmed by the exquisite diamond jewellery that only the Kotharis are known to create.



Sanjay Kothari, Vice Chairman of the KGK group, with his wife Manju. A man of strong convictions, clear vision and great ideas, Sanjay is based in Hong Kong. He has focused mainly on diversifying the group from its core business of diamonds and jewellery and played a pivotal role in taking the group global. The rewards of his diligent efforts can be witnessed across the gem and jewellery vertical of the group that encompasses mining to manufacturing, and marketing to distribution and retail. His passion for the trade led to the addition of two new verticals. The group entered the mining sector of coloured gemstones like emeralds, rubies and many more. In 2004, it also entered the retail business with its own fine jewellery brand 'Entice' in Hong Kong, China and then India, and also took in various international brands like Martin Flyer, Gregg Ruth and Judith Ripka under the group's umbrella. Sanjay has concrete plans for KGK's diversification into the real estate business and is looking forward to developing iconic structures with the same finesse and creativity that have been the focus of KGK group.

Manju Kothari is Creative Director of Entice, a jewellery design and retail outfit with its design and manufacturing base in Hong Kong. She is talented and creative, possesses astute business acumen along with an aesthetic eye. Traditional at heart, she personifies Indian values and culture to the core, while enjoying the lifestyle of a modern woman. Being the daughter of the Surana family – famous Jaipur-based traditional jewellers, her natural flair towards jewellery design led her to pursue a jewellery design course from the Gemological Institute of America (GIA). She followed this up by customised and well-selected design courses which boosted her creativity to stupendous heights. Manju Kothari believes in the strong values of the KGK group along with those of Entice and, therefore, takes pride in presenting jewellery as a form of art. An avid collector of art herself, she finds beauty in the simplest of things around her, which, in turn, inspire her to create magnificent pieces of jewellery for the well-informed and well-travelled woman of today.

years and was honoured for registering significant figures in the cut and polished diamonds export business in 1995-96 by the GJEPC.

The adage 'Rome was not built in a day' best explains the hard work, perseverance and success achieved by Navrattan Kothari, known as the leading diamontaire of Jaipur. A pragmatic, result-oriented approach in business, coupled with a burning desire to achieve excellence in every aspect of business, has enabled the Kotharis to create a niche in the highly competitive diamond business. Their business empire spans 16 countries, including India, Thailand, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Japan, UAE, Russia, Belgium, Israel, Botswana, Brazil, Mozambique, South Africa and the US. The Kotharis have even established their own diamond-cutting factories at several locations overseas, including Moscow, Johannesburg, Yakutia in Siberia and Gaborone in Botswana, and in India in Jaipur, Surat and Jaisalmer, providing employment to more than 9,000 people.

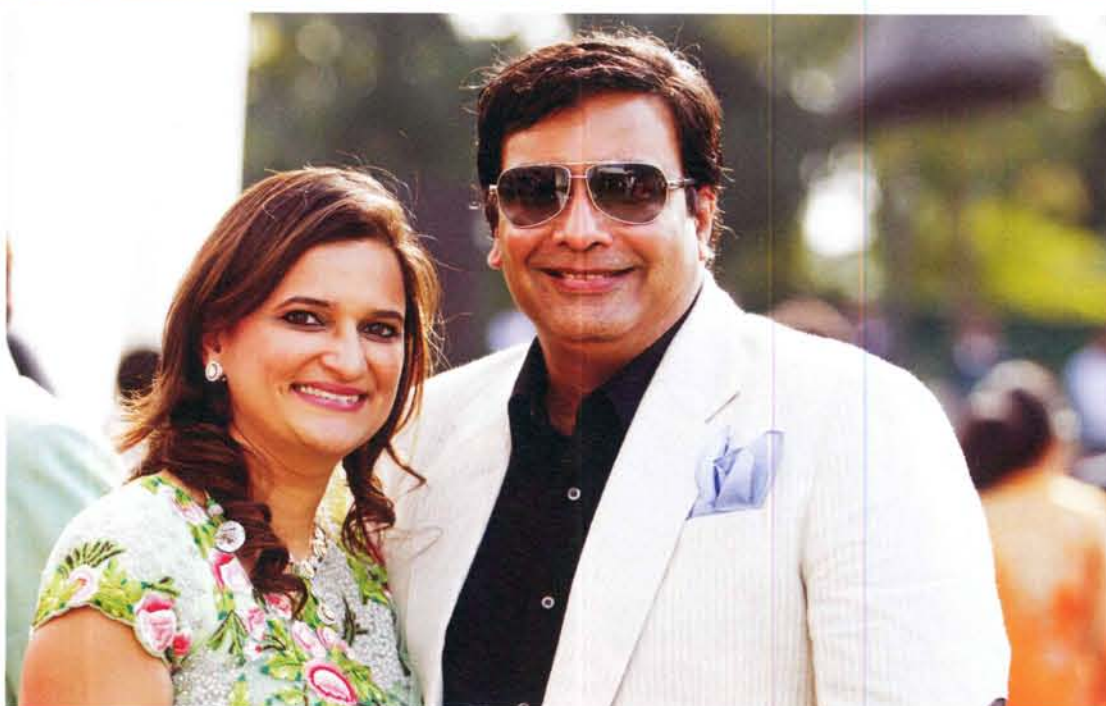
NRK has mastered the art of balanced living and successfully maintains a healthy work-life balance. His extremely supportive wife Anila has been the glue that successfully binds the entire family together and has stood by him through thick and thin. She grew up in a joint family where traditional values were as important as modernity. Anila Kothari is involved in a number of philanthropic activities in and around Jaipur. In spite of being a multinational conglomerate, the KGK group, owing to its grounded leader, has managed to stay true to both its founder's principles and to demonstrate his loyalty to his country and its culture.

Like any businessman with ambition, Kothari wants to see his business grow manifold; however, he believes that the true accumulation of wealth is conducive to a heightened sense of virtues. This is obvious in the many steps he has taken for the betterment and upliftment of society in the desert state. Chairman of the Bhagwan Mahaveer Cancer Hospital and

Top right: Sandeep Kothari, Managing Director of KGK, with his wife Preeti. The business of the company was growing rapidly when Sandeep joined the fray. He took charge of the crucial role of procurement and manufacturing of diamonds. Starting with diamond manufacturing in Mumbai, he expanded the factories in Surat, south Africa and Russia. He then relocated to Antwerp, the diamond hub, enhancing trade in rough and polished diamonds for the group. Under his direction, rough diamonds are directly sourced from Alrosa in Russia, DTC in South Africa, De Beers in London, Argyle in Australia, Rio Tinto, BHP and other organised markets in Antwerp. Sandeep's sharp business acumen and sound judgement have led to a significant global expansion of the family's business. His wife Preeti also takes an interest in the business apart from her interest in arts and crafts.



Below right: Surendra Kothari, eldest son of Navrattan Kothari who has been effectually instrumental in the growth on KGK's business in the US. He is married to Ritu who renewed her studies after marriage, completed her education on the insistence of Anila Kothari and came out with flying colours.



Research Centre, one of the largest cancer hospitals in northern India with high class medical facilities for cancer patients, NRK also founded the KGK Memorial Trust which is engaged in philanthropic activities. His wife Anila is Vice Chairperson of the hospital. She is the Chairperson of Cancer Care – an all-women's NGO. She spends most of her time with cancer patients, providing them with food, medicine and above all, emotional support. Through her tireless endeavours with KGK Dreams Foundation, she

has managed to put a smile on many strained faces. Sandeep Kothari also evinces a keen interest in the cancer hospital and continues to do his best towards gathering international coverage and fame for it.

The Kotharis' philanthropic arm stretches to education as well. As President of the Subodh Shiksha Samiti for nearly two decades, NRK ensures the best education for over 28,000 children from all age groups, with the aim of improving the quality of education in the state.



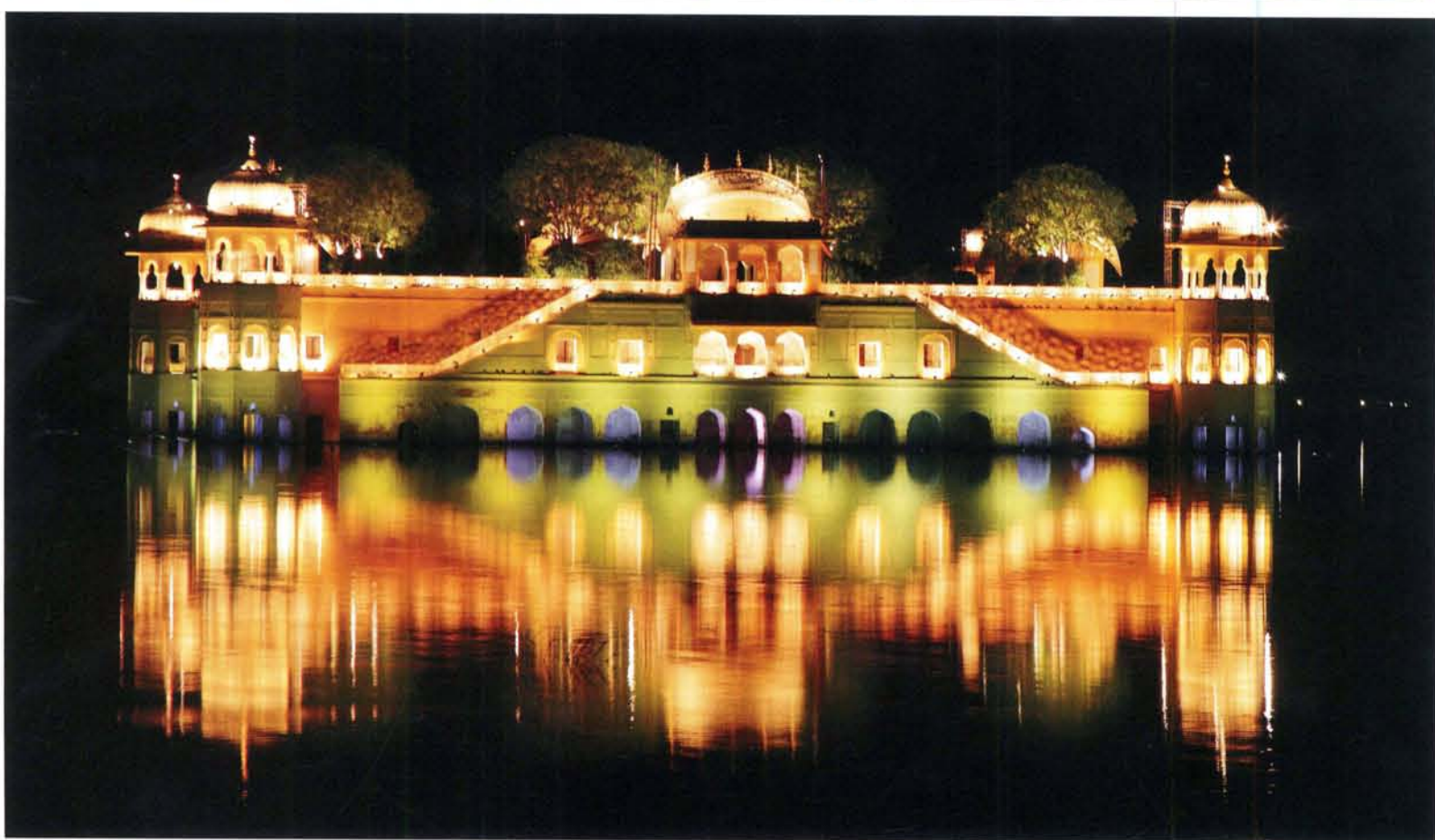
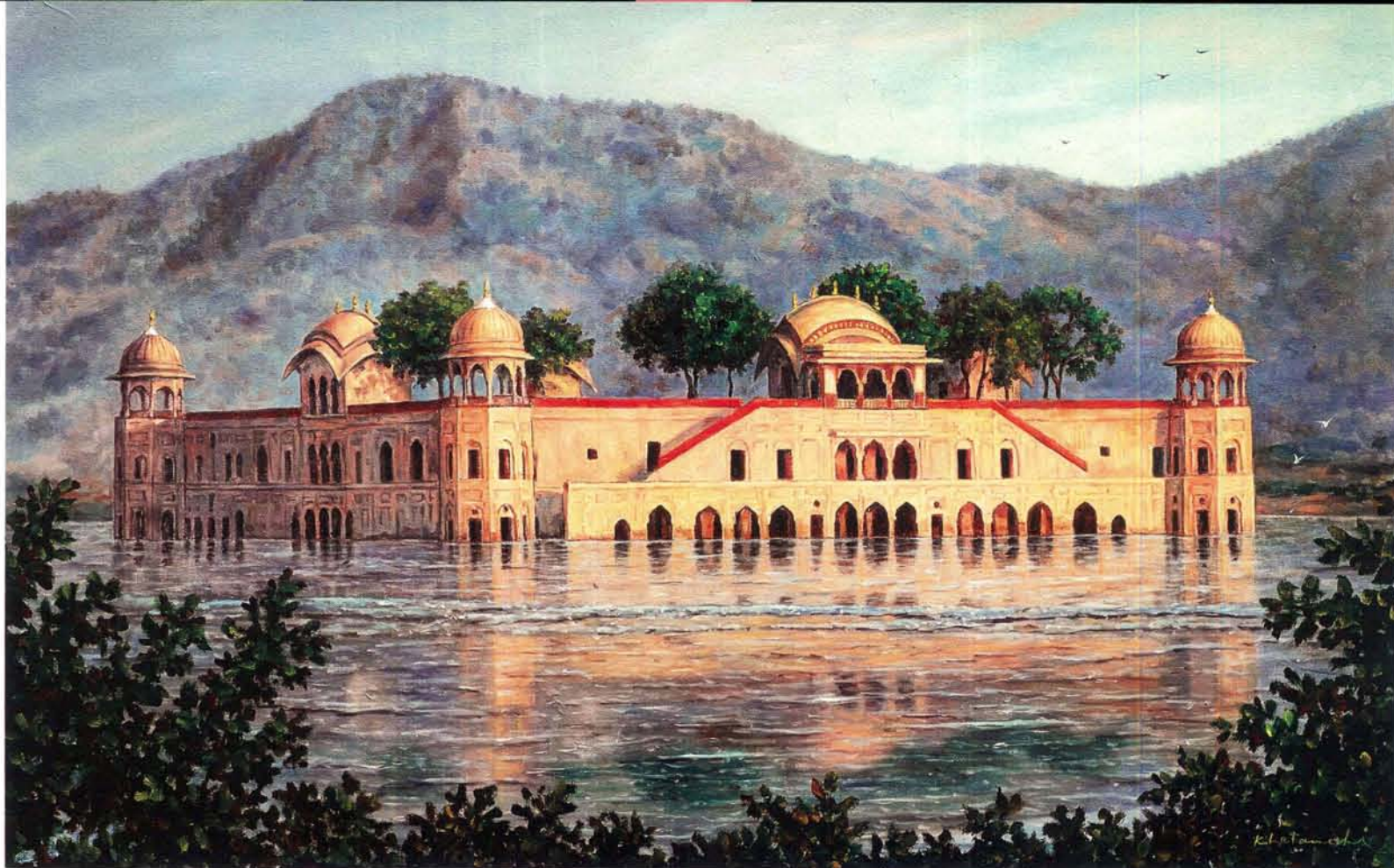
Top: The Bhagwan Mahaveer Cancer Hospital and Research Centre is fully equipped with the latest equipment and technology to extend multidisciplinary tertiary cancer care. It is the largest cancer hospital in northern India where a team of competent and highly skilled medical care professionals provide the cancer patient with comprehensive, quality treatment with a human touch. This hospital is managed by the KGK Trust, Jaipur, which takes care of patients, using the latest facilities. The advanced operation theatre, surgical ICU and the Phepkarwar Kothari Bhawan were inaugurated by Ashok Gehlot, former Chief Minister of Rajasthan.

Left: Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam with Anila Kothari at a visit to the Bhagwan Mahaveer Cancer Hospital and Research Centre. Dr Kalam commented: 'God bless you for your service to cancer patients.'

The Samiti runs schools, degree colleges, management institutes and engineering colleges in and around the city, and plans to start a university. The Samiti also focuses on providing education for the underprivileged through a special school.

Apart from formal education, Kothari has been actively involved in imparting training to over 5,000 young pupils in the gemstones, diamonds and jewellery business. Most of his disciples are now successfully running large diamond trading

firms in different parts of the world. His astute business acumen and compassionate spirit have been an inspiration for several others. NRK was even instrumental in setting up the Indian Institute of Gems and Jewellery at Jaipur. As one of the founder-members, he has played a vital role in enhancing awareness and understanding about the art of manufacturing contemporary Indian jewellery, thus bringing it on par with global standards through constant research and innovative designs.



Top: Painting of Jal Mahal by Khetanchi. Jal Mahal or the 'Water Palace' is located in the middle of the Man Sagar Lake, which is surrounded by the Nahargarh hills. In 2005, an agreement was signed between the government of Rajasthan and Jal Mahal Resorts to develop the land adjacent to Man Sagar Lake. Experts were hired from all over the world to restore the aesthetic beauty of Jal Mahal and Man Sagar Lake to their former glory. Traditional material was used and a team of skilled master craftsmen was assembled to revitalise the palace. Jal Mahal has once again become the jewel of Jaipur.

Above: The parched kingdom of Dhundar was resurrected by Raja Man Singh I in 1589 by constructing the Man Sagar Lake to receive the fresh water flow of the River Darbhavati. The dam water flowed into Man Sagar via Talkatora and Raja ka Talab and replenished the lake and its vicinity. His successor Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II maintained and purified the lake by blending it with the consecrated waters of Lake Mansarovar from Tibet and the Ganga, Indus and other holy rivers. Water was fetched from these rivers for the two Ashwamedha *yajnas* of 1737 and 1742. Being one of India's biggest man-made lakes, after the *yajnas*, the Man Sagar Lake was cleaned and made fit for bathing for the king, his queens and courtiers of the state. Sawai Pratap Singh built his pleasure palace, Jal Mahal, amidst its waters in 1799. The last royal celebration by Sawai Man Singh II and his Prime Minister, Sir Mirza Ismail, was held in the Jal Mahal Palace, but the subsequent years bespoke a dreary tale of neglect, pollution, encroachments and devastation.



Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, former Vice President, India, celebrating his birthday at Bhagwan Mahaveer Cancer Hospital and Research Centre with Navrattan Kothari and Anila Kothari. Through their centre, the Kotharis provide succour to thousands of cancer patients. Anila Kothari is Chairperson of Cancer Care – an all-women's NGO. She spends most of her time with cancer patients. Indeed, good corporate citizenship is part of the group's DNA.



Maharaja Sawai Bhawani Singh (MVC) presenting an award to Navrattan Kothari for his valuable and multifarious activities in business and public welfare. In 1997, the KGK group became the first organisation in Jaipur to be a sight-holder with the company now known as De Beers. Today, the group has ready access to all major diamond-mining companies for the supply of rough diamonds.

Even as Kothari leads his global conglomerate, his soul still lies in his home state or *janambhoomi*, while he humbly insists that he cannot completely repay his debts and will continue to be at its service always. He is the leading founder-promoter of the famous Entertainment Paradise – a centre for fun, frolic and amusement which comprises several movie halls, banquet halls, conference rooms, exclusive gardens and a food court. He intends to expand the centre by adding a yoga centre, health club, naturopathy centre and a luxury hotel. He is also planning to enhance Rajasthan's glory by undertaking a complete refurbishment of Jal Mahal to increase the inflow of tourists, national and international, and get the Mansagar Lake cleared of garbage and silt so that the required water levels are maintained. A mid-market hotel, a luxury hotel, an arts and crafts bazar and more are all part of this great visionary's future plans for the economic, social and cultural betterment of Jaipur and Rajasthan.

A firm proponent of the extended family system, Navrattan Kothari has also ensured that

the entire family contributes to the business. His son, Sanjay Kothari, is Vice Chairman of the KGK group. Based in Hong Kong, he focuses on the gemstones, jewellery and diamond business in the Far East. He is even actively diversifying the group into new business avenues of real estate development, infrastructure and entertainment. Sanjay's wife Manju is the creative head of Entice – a jewellery and retail company in India with its design and manufacturing base in Hong Kong. Sandeep, NRK's youngest son, is based in Belgium and manages the procurement of rough diamonds, and the manufacture, marketing and distribution of diamonds in India, Russia, Europe, Israel, South Africa and the US.

Navrattan Kothari's assiduous efforts over several decades have put India on the diamond business map as a contender to watch out for. His unparalleled success has not affected him adversely, and he is still known for his humility, generosity, humanitarian activities and, of course, business prowess. Not only has he brought great pride to his home state Rajasthan, he has become an icon for generations to come.

ORIGIN OF THE MARWARIS FROM SHEKHAWATI REGION IN RAJASTHAN



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I commend IIME, Jaipur on its excellent initiative in bringing the age-old sage of this enterprising community to the people through a coffee table book.
HAMID ANSARI, *Vice-President of India*

In preparing the volume, Dr D.K. Taknet has done thorough research for which he deserves congratulations as well as the gratitude of the reader. The rare images, be they of the past or present, offer visual pleasure while the accompanying descriptions make for absorbing reading. The volume is as much a symbol of transformation under way in India as the innovative enterprises that Marwari entrepreneurs are pioneering every day.

DR ARVIND PANAGARIYA, *Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, New Delhi*

I congratulate Dr D.K. Taknet on his commendable work that without any academic obfuscation offers a comprehensive account of the Marwari's historic contributions.
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN, *Minister of State (IC), Commerce & Industry, India*

In *The Marwari Heritage*, Dr D.K. Taknet has given a comprehensive account of the history and current achievements of this community. He has brought to light the little known facts about their contribution... His painstaking labour to reveal the history of this community over several centuries and keen insights into their ethos are quite evident in this work. To my knowledge there is hardly any comparable work about any other community in India. This book is a source of knowledge for anyone interested in the contribution of the Marwaris in diverse fields of our national life.

PROF V.S. VYAS, *Former Member, Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister*