

Shri Arvind Parikh - Biography

EARLY YEARS :

- Born in Rangoon, Burma on 23rd February 1931.
- Parents : Hiraben and Chhotalal Surajmal Parikh
- At the age of 2 and a half years, I was brought to Mumbai by my father's sister, as my mother was very ill and died at an early age.
- I was brought up by the family of late Shree Chandulal Mohanlal Mehta (Mohanlal Raichand and Sons), and lived with them in Mumbai for almost 20 years.
- Passed matriculation from Modern High School (Sikkanagar), Mumbai in 1946.
- Studied at Bhavans College upto inter-science.
- Married my life partner, Vasuben in 1954, who had always been my backbone, whom I can credit for all personal and professional achievements in life.

FIRST FOOT STEPS IN THE DIAMOND INDUSTRY :

- In year 1948 joined Mohanlal Raichand and Sons as an apprentice for one year.
- Went to Calcutta (Kolkata) for 6 months to learn marketing in diamonds with my uncle, late Shree Amratlal Parikh.
- Embarked upon my own diamond business in the year 1951.
- Went to Panna mines for diamond auctions with late Shree Vrajlalbhai of MR And Sons, to learn rough diamond valuation and buying.
- In the year 1954 with the help of a loan from my father bought my first rough diamonds worth Rupees 10,000 from Panna diamond auction.

START OF A 71 - YEAR LONG STELLAR CAREER :

- Was regularly buying old cut diamonds, parab and vilandi and recutting them.
- Established Arnik International in the year 1964.
- First time I travelled to Antwerp, Belgium in the year 1965 for rough purchase, turned out to be one of the most successful moment in my business career.
- Established Crystal Diamonds in the year 1976, which I am still running today along with my third generation.

FRIENDSHIPS FOR A LIFETIME :

- While working as a broker for rough and polished diamonds, came into contact with late Shree Arunbhai Mehta of RosyBlue. My business association with late Shree Arunbhai Mehta blossomed into a long-lasting friendship. Over the years, we both did business in several areas ranging from manufacturing to trading diamonds.
- Also worked in partnership with Shree Kavinbhai Parikh of Mahendra Brothers, purchasing and recutting old cut diamonds.
- Came into contact with late Shree Chhotubhai Shah and late Shree Parasbhai Jain with whom I started a joint venture named Diamond Star in the year 1965.
- Helped establish Bluestar in the year 1966, due to my close association and bonding with late Shree Vasantbhai Mehta which has also blossomed into a long-term friendship with him and his whole family.

AWARDS, HONOURS & MEMBERSHIPS :

- In year 1968 was elected as a working committee member of the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), for diamond panel and became a convener the same year.
- In the Year 1972 was selected by diamond panel to represent diamond industry in the first composite delegation of the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council. As a member of the delegation, I visited Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, England and USA.
- IS founding member of the Diamond Exporters Association limited in year 1973. Have been its President since the last 30 years.
- In year 1976 was appointed leader of Council's Diamond Delegation to USA, Canada and Venezuela. Late Shree Arunbhai Mehta was one of the 4 members of the delegation.
- I was appointed as a member of the delegation to Tanzania by Government of India on a fact finding mission at the request of the Tanzanian government in late 1970s.
- In early 1980s was appointed as a leader of the diamond delegation of GJEPC to Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. Subsequently was also appointed the leader of the diamond delegation in early 80s to Japan and South Korea.
- Founding member of Bharat Diamond Bourse in year 1984. Had been the vice president for 6 years.

- Was GJEPC committee member for consecutive 22 years since 1968 and was elected 6 times as the vice chairman of the council.
- Visited New Delhi several times to represent the GJEPC council and met several dignitaries like late Shree Pranab Mukherjee and late Shree ND Tiwari who were then the Finance and commerce ministers of the Government of India, to discuss the problems faced by our diamond industry.
- Was appointed as a member of the Tri Party committee formed by Finance Ministry to sort out problems faced by our diamond industry. Committee also included two commissioners of Income Tax department and a Chartered Accountant.
- In Late 1980s with kind assistance of late Shree Murali Deora, met the then Prime minister of India, Late Shree Rajiv Gandhi with dozen members of the delegation.
- Was instrumental in removing onus of proof in diamonds for customs purpose by amendment in Parliament by the ministry of Finance.
- At the request of late Shree Rajiv Gandhi met Shree Montek Singh Alhuwalia to discuss problems related to diamond industry.
- Trustee of the Gemological Institute of India (GII) since 19 years.
- Is president of Gem & Jewellery Exporters Association since last 4 years.
- Visited several diamond cutting factories in Tanzania, Antwerp, Bangkok and Surat
- In 1991 during foreign exchange crisis of government of India, Reserve bank of India banned remittances of imported rough diamonds. Following which arranged a meeting of DEAL members with RBI deputy governor and his team. During the course of our meeting we convinced the RBI team led by deputy governor that from the next day we would not import further rough diamonds but what had been imported must be allowed to remit the payment. After 3 days of internal discussions within the RBI team, they agreed and allowed the remittance of rough diamonds already imported.

HOBBIES & INTERESTS :

- Just like a diamond has multiple facets, Mr. Arvindbhai Parikh was a multi-faceted individual who had several hobbies and interests outside his industry.
- A Keen Cricket Enthusiast, I captained the Palanpur Cricket Club for about 10 years. Played several tournaments as member of the club like Talim Shield, Pursottam Shield and Kanga League. Scored a century in Kanga League match.
- Loved travelling the globe, and embarked on many a vacations with my gracious wife, who equally shared with me, the passion of travelling. In a world where Facebook or Instagram was non-existent, and the possibility of camera phones seemed improbable, we created millions of beautiful memories in our minds.
- Gregarious by nature, we had a huge group of friends with whom we spent weekends playing cards, watching movies and plays, or just generally catching up at each other's homes.

CLOSING WORDS :

- Despite spending over 70 years in the market, I continue to remain a student of the Diamond Industry.
- Even till date, I visit office daily, check every diamond sitting on my table, and guide my new generation on the tricks and nuances of the trade.
- I've been blessed to have a successful career where I've interacted with several wonderful personalities. Had the privilege to personally meet leading world jewelers like Harry Winston and Bulgari of Italy.