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Parimal Nathwani –man behind India's largest Greenfield oil refinery

Parimal Nathwani, a multi-faceted personality, strongly believes that nobility, forthrightness, hard work and a little dash of destiny makes a man. His story right from a 'Mr Nobody' to a man of many things is a classic example of what determination, sincerity and conviction can achieve.

By Mayuri Dave

"There is no failure in life; 'Not Trying' is indeed the biggest failure." This is the philosophy of **Parimal Nathwani**, a face of Reliance Industries in Gujarat and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha).

Nathwani was hand-picked by **Dhirubhai**

setting up the refinery. "That was the turning point of my life," affirms Nathwani adding that the task was Herculean, but he did everything to help Reliance acquire nearly 20,000 acres of land that too with farmers' consent.

The investment and the scale of the project were

Remembering fond memories with his role model, Nathwani says, "Dhirubhai's philosophy was 'Impossible can be made possible.' I was completely convinced with it and have great faith in RIL leadership in general and Mukesh Ambani in particular."



Ambani when he decided to build Asia's largest crude oil refinery in Jamnagar. Popularly known as PN in his close circles, he is playing a crucial role right from acquiring land for the refinery till today.

"I consider Dhirubhai as my role model. He taught me the traits of determination, decision making, hard-work and self-confidence. I had failed in my business earlier. He taught me to learn from mistakes in life," says a nostalgic Nathwani while talking to Asian Voice.

Hailing from a small town - Jam Khambhalia in Gujarat, he studied in Mumbai and got his doctorate in management from National Institute of Management. After completing studies, he joined the bleaching department of New Era Mills. After a short stint there, he became an entrepreneur and started a soap agency in Mumbai and later on initiated a partnership firm for manufacturing and marketing bath soap. However, the soap business turned out to be all frothy and he decided to plunge into the stock markets. Hoping to ride the bulls, Nathwani was done in by the bears during the infamous Harshad Mehta scam in early 1990s.

Despite series of failure in businesses, his faith in God didn't diminish, he says adding that a meeting with Dhirubhai Ambani – the father of India's capital markets – and his illustrious son **Mukesh Ambani** in 1995 changed his life. "Dhirubhai took me under his wings at a time when Reliance was planning the country's largest Greenfield refinery at Moti Khavdi village in Jamnagar district", he asserts. Since then, Nathwani didn't look back. He literally fulfilled Dhirubhai's dream and played a pivotal role in land acquisition by removing hurdles in the process of

enormous. Again gutsy Nathwani was key player for Reliance to finalize deals for 400 properties on ownership basis and 1,200 properties on lease in Jamnagar city and surrounding areas – all this before market rates could escalate sensing that it was for a corporate giant like Reliance.

Top management of Reliance, that includes current chairman Mukesh Ambani, saw huge potential in Nathwani and decided to give him bigger platform and relocate him to Ahmedabad from Jamnagar in 1997. He too reciprocated aptly and in no time Nathwani became the face of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) in Gujarat and elsewhere.

PN spearheaded several prestigious projects for the group. Right from mammoth task of acquiring land from refinery to setting up of petroleum retail outlets and even establishing Jamnagar Special Economic Zone, Nathwani was always at the centre of all important activities of RIL.

He also contributed to cross country gas transportation pipeline network and also in executing telecom network for erstwhile Reliance Infocomm in a record time and helped setting up consumer retail chain for the group. Now since the RIL is poised to roll out 4-G broadband network in 22 circles of the country, he is once again on the steering wheel to lead the project on the fast track. He has been positioned as in charge of RIL's corporate affairs, human resources and industrial relations in Gujarat, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh. He is also in the core leadership and top management of RIL. His ability to develop relationship transformed into nationwide network and Nathwani emerged as trouble shooter for RIL anywhere in the country.

In March 2008 another "Turning Point" came in his life. "It was Mukeshbhai, who inspired me when I proposed to enter the fray for Rajya Sabha. I mince no words when I say what I could achieve was due to support and confidence he reposed in me."

In March 2008 Nathwani won Rajya Sabha election as an independent candidate from Jharkhand. Although, an alien to the region, he perhaps is the first and only Rajya Sabha MP to keep his promise and open an office in the region.

Besides, government funds, he also contributes in his own way for various charitable and public welfare activities. Nathwani has created drinking water and sanitation facilities for Islamnagar, a poor slum in the heart of Ranchi town and made the area worth living. He also promised to rebuild a hospital run by Ranchi Municipal Corporation from his own funds. With tribal and minorities being the focus of the welfare work, Nathwani spent his personal fund. He raised more than 600 questions and issues in the Rajya Sabha, of which half were pertaining to Jharkhand.

A mad cricket lover who used to bunk classes and even examination for the sport, Nathwani injured his eye while playing the gentlemen's game. Apart from MP and RIL's Group President (Corporate Affairs and Projects), he is also the vice president of Gujarat Cricket Association in which Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi is the president.

He also holds key positions in many organizations that include Reliance Rural Development Trust (Chairman), Dwarka and Nathdwara temple boards, Shree Bruhad Guajrat Sanskrit Prarishad and many others.