

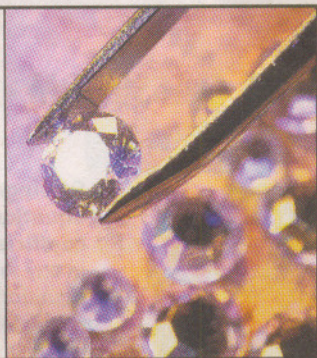
■ **THE** world's first ever diamond was mined in India. Diamond production can be traced back to 8th century B. If the trade has its way and the government obliges, India will soon become a leader in the field of jewellery manufacturing and distribution.

■ India was the largest consumer and fabricator of gold in 2004. India is the third largest consumer of diamonds. India has also been a major centre of the coloured gemstone trade since before Harappan days. Nineteen percent of India's total exports standing at US \$ 63.45 billion is of diamond and jewellery industry and is growing by at least 18% since last year.

■ The domestic gold and diamond jewellery market stands at about US \$ 15 billion. Two million highly skilled workforce in the gem and jewellery sector and eight lakh involved in cutting of diamonds, which is bound to increase in the coming

SUNRISE INDUSTRY: GEM & JEWELLERY

Dhara Kothari
unearths the
facets of an up
and coming
career option
that is shining
with brilliance!



jewels of india

years. With 3000 Indian offices worldwide for distribution and marketing it further aims to become an international trading hub very soon.

The launch of branded jewellery in 1994 has created a revolution with 50 brands already available today. "Although the preferred jewellery, diamond jewellery is gaining popularity too and so is coloured stones jewellery and pearls," pointed Mehul Choksi, Chairman of Gitanjali Jewels. "Projection of domestic jewellery market for the year 2010 stands at US \$ 34.2 billion. Jewellery buying is not confined to marriages and religious functions and heavy jewellery. More and more working women and even teenagers are purchasing light and modern jewellery. "Indian men are moving beyond rings and cufflinks. They are now buying neck-wear, bracelets and even ear-studs. There is specialised jewellery catering to children as well," observed B Shah of Snow Flakes Gem and Jewellery.

An increasing number of jewellery designers and even corporates are setting up shop. The need for skilled workers is on upswing. "There is growing demand of skilled professionals. The industry is growing above 30% annually. So, a strong foundation of skilled human resources is essential to build a strong presence in the jewellery market," claims Col SK Arora, head of Indian Institute of Gems and Jewellery (IIGJ) It is the only full-fledged Institute in the country for training in all aspects of jewellery from concept to marketing. Other institutes that offer training in this are Gemmological Institute of India, St. Xavier's College and Indian Diamonds Institute etc.

All these offer certificate and diploma, which can be done after class 12. None of these offer a degree course, since these are highly specialised and industry specific courses.