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PROFILE

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President, ARK Reza Kabul Architects

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Warehouse Roofing

IN CONVERSATION

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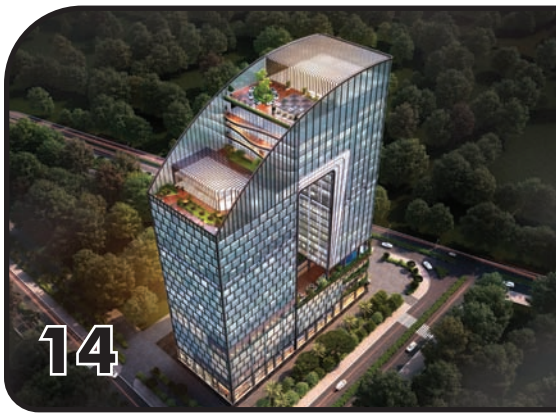

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THE CHALLENGE TODAY

Designers need to gear up in the new social-media age of evolving mood boards.

Like its humungous impact on every other aspect, social media has also dramatically expanded the visual vocabulary of demanding clients.

Designers and even architects as a rule now encounter new challenges in their professional life. They can see how it has compressed timelines, inflated expectations and created a belief that every image can be instantly translated into reality. For interior designers, the challenge is not merely aesthetic; it is operational.

The first requirement, according to many of them, is to move from presenting designs to curating decisions. Clients flashing Pinterest boards and Instagram saves often want conflicting styles, materials and price points. Today's designer needs to structure briefing processes that distil inspiration into a clear design direction so they freeze key decisions early in any project.

Clients today (and in any age for that matter) are visually informed but not necessarily informed about lead times, installation complexities or lifecycle costs. The professional has to run twice as fast since detailed material schedules, procurement timelines and transparent cost breakdowns prevent social-media aspirations from turning into project disruptions.

The new age client is always in a hurry. Thus, it's important to strengthen digital communication. Since clients increasingly discover designers online, portfolios can no longer be mere galleries of completed projects. They need to be communicated process, problem-solving capability and the rationale behind design decisions. Showing how a project evolves often builds more credibility than displaying another polished image.

Not my place to advise experts, but designers do need to consciously protect their own creative position. In an environment of endless references and rapidly circulating trends, professional value lies in interpretation rather than replication. Thankfully, professionals know their key differentiator is contextualising ideas and adapting them into original, buildable solutions for users.

The social-media era has not diminished the role of interior designers. It has simply raised the premium on clarity, adaptability and professional judgement.

That's the new area of expertise that's come into play today. Perhaps, yesterday.

Anurag Yadav

The view expressed in the column are of the author, and may or may not be endorsed by the publication.

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PierPop Festival activates Mumbai waterfront

AU Staff | Mumbai

Mumbai's historic Ballard Pier has been transformed into a vibrant public destination with the launch of PierPop, a new waterfront festival celebrating culture, food and community engagement. The event features art installations, entertainment programmes and curated experiences designed to attract residents and visitors alike. By activating an underutilised waterfront location, the initiative highlights the growing importance of placemaking and public-space programming in urban development as per a press release.

The festival also demonstrates how temporary cultural interventions can encourage citizens to reconnect with the city's maritime heritage while exploring new possibilities for waterfront revitalisation. ■

Image Courtesy: Parametric Architecture

Herzog & de Meuron reimagines Titlis Tower

AU Staff | Mumbai

Swiss architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron has transformed the former Titlis telecommunications tower into a striking visitor destination high in the Swiss Alps. Located over 3,000 metres above sea level, the 56-metre-tall structure has been adapted rather than demolished, reflecting a resource-conscious approach to alpine development.

The redesigned tower features glazed volumes housing a restaurant, retail spaces and viewing areas, while preserving the original steel framework. A 360-degree observation deck offers panoramic views of the surrounding glacier landscape. The project marks the first completed phase of the larger TITLIS masterplan, scheduled for completion by 2029. ■

Hyderabad growth fuels infrastructure demand

AU Staff | Mumbai

Hyderabad's emergence as a major global business and technology destination is driving increased demand for future-ready urban infrastructure. Rapid expansion across sectors such as IT, life sciences and advanced manufacturing has accelerated the need for improved mobility, housing and public amenities.

Ongoing investments in metro connectivity, road networks, commercial districts and smart-city initiatives are helping accommodate the city's growth. Industry experts believe that integrated planning and sustainable infrastructure development will be essential to maintaining Hyderabad's competitiveness while supporting long-term economic expansion and enhancing quality of life for its growing population. ■

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Designing with Intelligence, Humility and Purpose

As India's built environment undergoes rapid transformation, the role of design professionals is expanding far beyond aesthetics. From sustainability and urban resilience to interdisciplinary collaboration and professional ethics, today's architects and interior designers are helping shape the future of our cities and communities. In conversation with **Tejaswini Paranjape, Architect Himanshu Thakkar, former Chairman of IIID Nagpur and Founder of Happy Home Associates**, shares his perspectives on the evolving design landscape, industry challenges, and the legacy he hopes to leave behind.

Q Having led IIID, how do you see the role of design professionals evolving in shaping India's future built environment?

I'd say design professionals in India must have awareness about mother earth as much as creators. The real opportunity is to shape not only buildings, but better cities, better neighbourhoods, and a better quality of life with sustainability.

Q What are the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the architecture and interior design fraternity today?

Personally, I think challenges and issues are as mentioned below

1) Coordination and execution pressure are rising. Many studios are dealing with fragmented workflows, version-control issues, vendor dependence, and mid-project changes that create delays and cost overruns

2) Client expectations are higher. People want custom, fast, cost-conscious, and aesthetically strong solutions, which puts pressure on small and mid-size firms to deliver more with less.

3) The industry is still unevenly organized. Lack of standardization, inconsistent quality benchmarks, and a large unorganized segment make it harder to build trust and scale professionally

Q How can greater collaboration between architects, interior designers, developers, and product manufacturers improve project outcomes?

Greater collaboration improves project outcomes by aligning design intent, technical feasibility, cost control, and execution from the start. When architects, interior designers, developers, and manufacturers work as one team, projects are more cohesive, faster to deliver, and less likely to suffer from costly rework.

Q In an era of rapid urbanisation, how can design help create spaces that are both sustainable and culturally rooted?

Choosing regionally available materials lowers transport impact and often improves climate performance. Bringing in local craft, textures, and construction traditions also helps spaces feel rooted in place rather than copied from a generic global style

Q Looking back at your journey with IIID and the design community, what legacy would you like to leave for the next generation of professionals?

I completed my successful tenure of two year as Chairman of IIID Nagpur. I believe that a meaningful legacy is not just about completed projects or leadership positions. It is about building confidence in the next generation so they can think independently, work ethically, and raise the standards of the profession & organisation. If I had to summarize it in one line, it would be this: leave behind a community that designs with intelligence, humility, and purpose. ■

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Architect Himanshu Thakkar is the Immediate Past Chairman of the Indian Institute of Interior Designers (IIID), Nagpur Regional Chapter. A graduate in Interior Designing (2008), he specialises in residential and commercial interiors and has executed numerous projects across Nagpur and Central India. Over the years, he has worked with leading corporate clients including Panasonic, Gati and Confidence Petroleum. Actively involved in the design fraternity, he served as Hon. Treasurer of IIID Nagpur for three consecutive terms before taking on the role of Chairman. Through his continued involvement, he aims to contribute towards meaningful reforms in the field of interior design.

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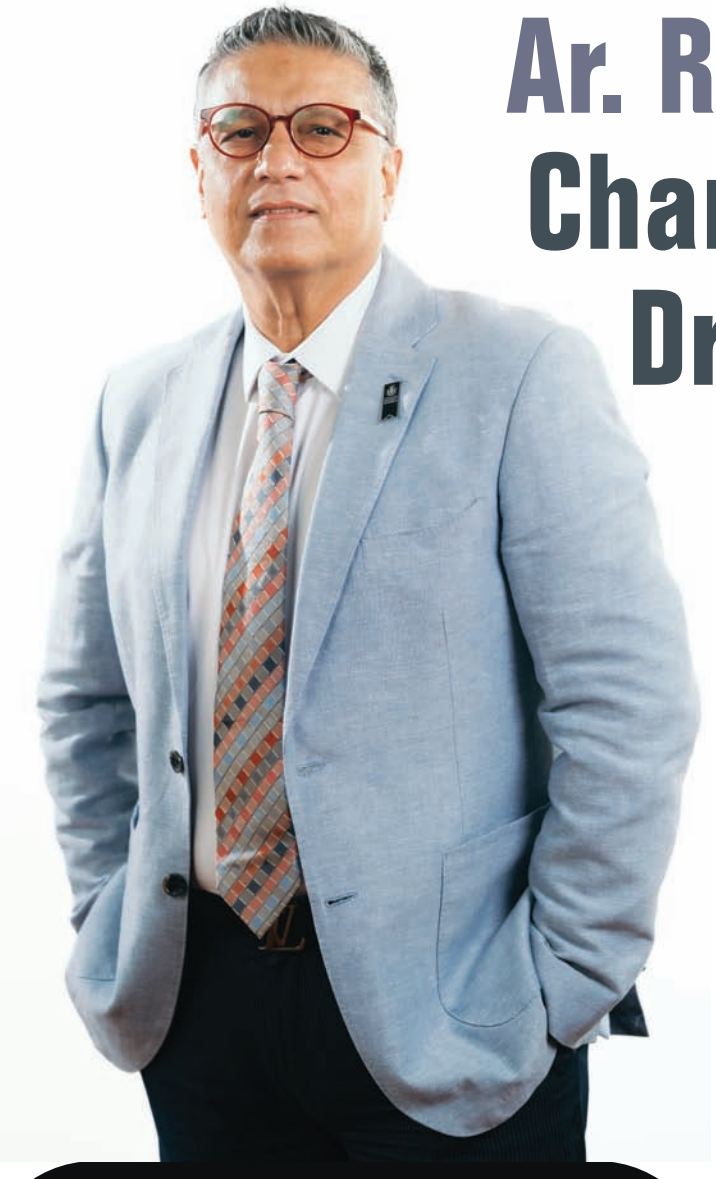

Ar. Reza Kabul Champions Context Driven Design Philosophy

Prasenjit Chakraborty | Mumbai

His design philosophy is rooted in a deep understanding of context, functionality, and responsibility. Guided by constant learning and critical observation, he approaches architecture as a balance of innovation and practicality, creating spaces that are thoughtful, efficient, and responsive to changing needs.

For Ar. Reza Kabul, President, ARK Reza Kabul Architects Pvt. Ltd, a great deal of learning has come through observation. Whenever he looked at a building, whether it was considered good or not, he would identify its shortcomings and understand what could have been done better. Over time, this became an important part of his approach. Ar. Kabul, believes that learning comes not only from one's own work but also from the mistakes of others, and he makes a conscious effort not to repeat them. This constant process of observing, learning, and refining has significantly shaped his architectural philosophy.

Context Drives Design

Ar. Kabul's design process always begins with understanding the context—whether it is the location, the client's vision, or the market it caters to. Once that foundation is clear, the creative process naturally follows. However, he believes that creativity must be grounded in practicality. A design should not only look good on paper but also be executable and function effectively in reality. For him, the process is about finding the right balance, where design, functionality, and feasibility come together seamlessly to create something meaningful and enduring.

Challenges Shape Growth

In his experience, brownfield projects are often the most challenging. They require a thorough understanding of what already exists—the limitations, shortcomings, and constraints—before identifying ways to improve upon them. Unlike greenfield projects, they do not offer the freedom to start from scratch, making the approach far more thoughtful and strategic. Through these experiences, he has learned the importance of patience, adaptability, and problem-solving. Brownfield projects push Ar. Kabul to think more deeply and have ultimately helped him become a more responsible and sensitive designer.

Sustainability by Design

For him, sustainability begins at the planning stage itself. It is

about making the right decisions early on—whether related to orientation, natural light, ventilation, or the choice of materials—so that a building performs efficiently over time. Innovation plays a key role in enabling this approach. With evolving technologies and construction methods, he believes it is possible to design smarter, build faster, and achieve better quality.

At the same time, Ar. Kabul emphasizes the importance of designing for the future by anticipating emerging challenges, changing weather conditions, and increasing urban pressures. In his view, buildings should be more self-sustaining rather than overly dependent on external systems. Ultimately, he believes that architecture today must be responsible not only in how it looks but also in how it performs over the long term.

Future of Architecture

Ar. Kabul believes that the next decade will witness a stronger shift towards performance-driven and responsible architecture. In his view, the focus will extend beyond how a building looks to how efficiently it functions over time. There will be greater emphasis on sustainability, adaptability, and designing for future challenges, whether related to climate, urban density, or evolving lifestyles.

At the same time, he anticipates that safety and security will become increasingly critical considerations. Issues such as evacuation planning, fire safety, and overall building resilience will need to be addressed with greater seriousness, given the growing complexities and risks associated with urban environments.

He also believes that technology will continue to shape the way buildings are designed and constructed, making processes faster, more efficient, and more precise. However, beyond these advancements, he feels that the true focus of architecture will return to creating human-centric spaces—architecture that is practical, safe, and meaningful in everyday life. ■

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Aluminium at the Edge: Building Tomorrow's High-Performance Facades

Theodoros Axouristos, Managing Director, Alumil India, details how advanced aluminium systems drive sustainable architecture through energy-efficient envelopes, Loop 80 circularity, and ultra-slim profiles. In a conversation with **Tejaswini Paranjape**, he outlines innovations balancing aesthetics, cost, and climate response to define future-ready façades for India's evolving built environment.

Q As building envelopes become critical to energy performance, how do you see aluminium systems shaping the future of sustainable architecture?

Building envelopes have evolved from being purely aesthetic elements to becoming critical contributors to a building's overall energy performance, occupant comfort and sustainability goals. In this context, advanced aluminium systems are poised to play a transformative role in the future of sustainable architecture. Modern aluminium fenestration systems are engineered to deliver superior thermal performance through innovations like thermal break technology, high-performance glazing integration and advanced sealing systems. These solutions significantly reduce heat transfer, minimise energy loss and improve indoor comfort, thereby lowering the overall energy consumption of buildings.

Aluminium also offers a unique combination of strength, durability and design flexibility, enabling architects to create larger openings that maximise natural daylight and enhance the connection between indoor and outdoor spaces. This not only improves occupant well-being but also reduces dependence on artificial lighting and mechanical cooling systems. Equally important is the material's sustainability profile. It is highly durable, requires minimal maintenance and is recyclable without compromising its properties, aligning with lifecycle performance and circular economy principles.

We are also witnessing a shift from material-led decisions to performance-driven specifications, where developers and architects increasingly prioritise thermal insulation, acoustic comfort, air and water tightness, and long-term value. As sustainable construction becomes the norm, engineered aluminium systems backed by certified performance will continue to shape high-performance, future-ready buildings.

Q After the launch of Loop 80, how do you see circularity and recycled materials influencing architectural specifications in the years ahead?

The launch of Loop 80 reflects a broader transformation taking place across the construction and building materials industry, where sustainability is increasingly becoming a key criterion in project planning and material selection. At Alumil, we believe circularity and the use of recycled materials will play a much larger role in architectural specifications in the years ahead, moving from a niche consideration to a mainstream requirement.

Today, architects, developers and institutional clients are looking beyond the immediate performance of a material and evaluating its environmental impact across the entire lifecycle of a building. Factors including recyclability, responsible sourcing and contribution to green building certifications are becoming increasingly important in the specification process. Aluminium is particularly well positioned in this transition because it is recyclable without any loss of quality or performance. The use of high recycled-content aluminium significantly reduces carbon emissions

while continuing to deliver the strength, durability, aesthetics and performance that modern architecture demands.

With sustainability targets becoming more ambitious, products with verified recycled content and transparent environmental credentials will gain greater preference. Going forward, architectural decisions will increasingly consider not only performance, but also how responsibly a product is produced, how long it lasts and how effectively it can re-enter the value chain. Solutions like Loop 80 demonstrate how innovation and sustainability can work together to create the next generation of high-performance building materials.

Q As architects continue to push for larger openings and seamless transparency, what innovations are redefining façade and fenestration design?

Architects are increasingly seeking solutions that maximise natural light, strengthen the connection between indoor and outdoor spaces, and create clean, minimalist aesthetics without compromising performance or structural integrity. One of the key innovations driving this transformation is the development of slim and ultra-slim aluminium profile systems. With almost invisible frame widths, these systems significantly reduce visual barriers, allowing glass to become the dominant design element while maintaining the strength required for large spans.

Advancements in sliding and lift-and-slide technologies have also redefined what is possible in façade and fenestration design. Modern systems can now accommodate large glass panels, enabling architects to create expansive openings with smooth operation, enhanced stability and superior performance. At the same time, innovations in thermal break technology, high-performance glazing integration and advanced sealing systems ensure that larger glazed areas do not compromise energy efficiency or occupant comfort.

Automation is another important development, with motorised sliding systems, smart locking mechanisms and intelligent building integration enhancing convenience, security and user experience. Aluminium's strength, lightweight properties and design flexibility will continue to enable larger openings, slimmer sightlines and innovative architectural expressions while meeting increasingly stringent performance standards.

Q How can India accelerate the adoption of high-performance building envelopes while balancing aesthetics, cost and sustainability?

High-performance building envelopes are not just a technology upgrade—they are a strategic investment in India's sustainable urban future. Through advanced aluminium systems, localized manufacturing and performance-driven design, Alumil enables architects and developers to achieve the perfect balance of aesthetics, cost-efficiency and sustainability.

Firstly, the market must shift its focus from upfront cost to lifecycle value. High-performance aluminium systems significantly reduce HVAC loads, improve durability and lower maintenance costs over the building's lifespan. Industrialized and modular façade systems further optimise costs by reducing on-site labour, speeding up construction and ensuring consistent quality—an important advantage for India's rapidly expanding urban landscape.

Advanced aluminium systems also allow slim profiles, large spans and diverse finishes without compromising thermal or structural efficiency, ensuring that performance complements architectural creativity. India's diverse climatic conditions require region-specific envelope strategies combining thermal insulation, solar control and airtightness, and Alumil's systems are designed to adapt accordingly.

To scale adoption, awareness and skill development are equally important. Alumil actively supports fabricator training, digital design tools and system integration to ensure accurate specification and execution. Sustainability remains central through the Loop 80 Process, which supports circular construction while contributing to green building certifications such as IGBC and LEED. Stronger ECBC implementation and policy incentives will further accelerate the transition towards performance-driven façades.

Q What will distinguish a future-ready façade from a conventional one, and how is Alumil preparing for that transformation?

The façade of the future is an intelligent interface—combining performance, sustainability and design freedom. Unlike conventional façades focused primarily on enclosure and aesthetics, future-ready solutions are engineered to deliver superior thermal insulation, airtightness, solar control and acoustic comfort, directly improving energy efficiency and occupant well-being.

Integration with sensors and automation will enable façades to respond dynamically to changing environmental conditions by adjusting shading, daylight and ventilation in real time. Equally important is sustainability, with low-carbon, fully recyclable materials such as aluminium supporting circular construction through design for disassembly and reuse.

Industrialized, prefabricated and unitized façade systems will also replace labour-intensive site methods by enabling faster installation, higher quality and reduced construction waste.

Alumil is preparing for this transformation through continuous investment in advanced R&D, developing high-performance aluminium systems with thermal breaks, ultra-slim aesthetics and smart integration capabilities. The company is also advancing sustainable innovation through recyclable materials and low-carbon production aligned with global ESG goals, while supporting localized manufacturing, modular construction and partner training to ensure precision, quality and scalable implementation across the industry. ■

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Designing the Next Generation of Smart, Sustainable Bathroom Spaces

Sandeep Abraham, President, Sales and Growth Strategy (Domestic and International), CERA, shares how evolving consumer aspirations, smart technologies, water-efficient innovations, and integrated design solutions are redefining the modern bathroom. In a conversation with **Tejaswini Paranjape**, he discusses the trends shaping wellness-centric spaces, CERA's sustainability-led approach, and the company's vision for creating future-ready bathroom ecosystems across India's rapidly evolving built environment.

Q As bathrooms evolve into wellness-centric spaces, what design trends do you see shaping the future of bathroom experiences in India?

Consumers today seek designs that promote comfort, relaxation, and well-being while reflecting their lifestyle aspirations.

Key trends shaping the future include spa-inspired interiors, larger showering spaces, minimalist aesthetics, and coordinated bathroom collections that create a seamless look. Wall-hung sanitaryware, concealed systems, and soothing colour palettes are becoming increasingly popular for their clean and clutter-free appeal.

Technology is also redefining the bathroom experience, with smart toilets, touchless faucets, sensor-based solutions, and water-efficient products enhancing hygiene, convenience, and sustainability. At the same time, there is growing demand for premium materials, customized designs, and integrated wellness solutions that elevate everyday routines.

At CERA, we believe the future bathroom will seamlessly combine design, wellness, hygiene, sustainability, and smart technology, creating spaces that are not only functional but also enriching, comfortable, and inspiring.

How is CERA balancing the growing demand for premium aesthetics with increasing expectations around sustainability and water efficiency?

Under Ceraluxe brand, we are offering premium innovative design, sustainability, superior quality and environmentally conscious engineering. Ceraluxe enables consumers to create premium bathroom spaces that are both beautiful and sustainable.

Our product development focuses on creating elegant, contemporary bathroom solutions that not only enhance aesthetics but also promote responsible water and resource usage.

Our faucets incorporate water-saving technologies without compromising performance, while our sanitaryware is designed for efficient flushing and long-term durability. We also offer sensor-based and touchless solutions that improve hygiene while optimizing water consumption in both residential and commercial spaces.

Sustainability extends beyond our products to our manufacturing processes, where we continuously invest in efficient technologies and responsible practices.

As architects increasingly seek integrated solutions, how is CERA redefining its role beyond being a product manufacturer?

At CERA, we have evolved from being a product manufacturer to becoming a complete bathroom solutions partner. We offer an integrated portfolio of sanitaryware, faucets, wellness products, shower partition's, vanities, tiles, constructions chemicals, mirrors, accessories, and kitchen solutions enabling architects and designers to create cohesive and well-coordinated spaces.

Beyond products, we collaborate closely with architects, interior designers, builders, and consultants from the planning stage, providing design support, product recommendations, technical expertise, and customized solutions for diverse project requirements.

Through our CERA Style Studios, professionals and customers can experience complete bathroom concepts and explore the latest innovations firsthand. By combining design, technology, quality, and service, CERA helps architects bring their vision to life while delivering functional, aesthetically consistent, and future-ready spaces.

Q How are changing consumer aspirations across India's emerging cities influencing your innovation and product development strategy?

The aspirations of consumers in India's emerging cities are evolving rapidly, with growing demand for premium designs, smart features, and better living experiences. Homeowners today are well-informed, design-conscious, and seek products that combine aesthetics, functionality, and value.

At CERA, these changing expectations drive our innovation and product development strategy. We continuously introduce contemporary designs, water-efficient solutions, smart technologies, and wellness-focused products that cater to diverse consumer preferences across different price segments.

Our strong market presence and extensive dealer network of Cera Style Gallery and company owned experience centre (CERA Style Studios) across the country, enable us to stay closely connected with customer needs and regional trends. This allows us to develop products that are relevant, accessible, and aligned with the aspirations of India's fast-growing urban markets while maintaining the highest standards of quality, innovation, and sustainability.

Q As smart and touchless technologies gain traction, how do you envision the future of the modern bathroom ecosystem?

The future of the modern bathroom ecosystem will be defined by the seamless integration of smart technology, hygiene, sustainability, and personalized comfort. Consumers are increasingly looking for solutions that make every day routines more convenient while promoting better health and efficient resource usage.

Smart toilets, touchless faucets, sensor-operated flushing systems, and intelligent shower solutions are becoming an integral part of modern bathrooms, enhancing hygiene, reducing water consumption, and delivering a superior user experience. These technologies are especially relevant in both residential and commercial spaces, where hygiene and efficiency are key priorities.

At CERA, we see technology as an enabler of better living. Our focus is on developing innovative solutions that combine elegant design with intelligent functionality, creating bathroom spaces that are intuitive, sustainable, and future-ready. The bathroom of tomorrow will not only be smarter but also more connected, hygienic, and wellness-oriented, transforming it into a truly holistic lifestyle space. ■

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BEYOND WALLS

The Rise of Experience-Driven Architecture

From ancient courtyards to contemporary skylines, Indian architecture is shifting focus. Today's most compelling spaces are designed not only to function efficiently, but to inspire feeling and experience. In the process, architecture is evolving from a discipline of construction into a powerful tool for shaping how people live, connect, and remember places.

Prasenjit Chakraborty | Mumbai

In India, architecture has always been more than just construction. From the shaded corridors of traditional havelis to temple courtyards that guide movement through ritual, and bustling bazaars that shape social life, spaces were historically designed around how people live, gather, and feel. Yet somewhere along the rapid urban expansion of the last few decades, this sensory and social intelligence was often replaced by efficiency, density, and speed.

Ar. Dr. Ponni M. Concessao
Founder & Principal Architect,
Oscar, Ponni, Rahul Architects

Today, a quiet shift is taking place again. Across Indian cities, architecture is moving beyond the idea of walls and structures toward something more fluid and human-centered—experience-driven design. It is no longer enough for buildings to function well. They must also shape emotions, guide behaviour, and create memory.

From Function to a Feeling: A New Design Language

Traditional modern architecture in India, especially in the post-liberalization urban boom, was largely driven by practicality. Residential towers optimized floor space, commercial buildings prioritized rental efficiency, and public infrastructure focused on capacity. While this approach addressed urgent growth needs, it often resulted in spaces that felt uniform and disconnected from human experience.

The emerging approach is different. Experience-driven architecture begins with a simple question: What should a person feel here?

According to Ar. Dr. Ponni M. Concessao, Founder & Principal Architect, Oscar, Ponni, Rahul Architects, Indian architecture is undergoing a significant transformation. "Traditionally, buildings were primarily designed for functionality, efficiency, and economic performance. Today, architects and designers are increasingly focusing on creating spaces that influence human emotions, experiences, and well-being. This shift recognizes that people interact with buildings through all their senses—sight, sound, smell, touch, memory, and cultural associations," points out Dr. Ponni.

She also says that the contemporary "wow factor" in architecture is no longer limited to engineering excellence or energy efficiency. Instead, it emerges from how spaces make people feel. "The integration of nature through gardens, water bodies, natural light, and green landscapes creates a sense of calm and connection. Magnificent scale, grandeur, and carefully crafted proportions inspire awe and pride, while the thoughtful use of colours can evoke comfort, optimism, and belonging," Dr. Ponni notes.

"In India, cultural identity also plays a crucial role in shaping emotional experiences. Architectural elements that reflect local traditions, heritage, and regional aesthetics create deeper connections between people and place," says Dr. Ponni.

In Indian hospitality design, for example, this shift is already visible. Luxury hotels in cities like Jaipur, Udaipur, and Kochi are moving away from generic international aesthetics and instead drawing from local materials, courtyards, water elements, and regional craft traditions. The goal is not just comfort but immersion—so that a guest doesn't simply stay in a hotel but experiences a place.

Similarly, retail spaces in metros like Mumbai and Bengaluru are evolving. Shopping malls are no longer just enclosed commercial boxes; they are becoming lifestyle ecosystems. Open atriums, natural lighting, curated cultural zones, and interactive installations are designed to keep

Dr. Ramesh
MD, Archinova Design X Build

people engaged longer—not through pressure, but through curiosity and sensory flow.

Dr. Ramesh, MD, Archinova Design X Build, also believes that Indian architecture is undergoing a significant transformation from a predominantly efficiency-driven approach toward a more human-centred design philosophy. "While post-independence architecture largely focused on functionality, urban density, cost optimization, and climatic performance, contemporary architects increasingly prioritize emotional well-being, sensory experience, social interaction, and psychological health. This shift reflects the emergence of experiential architecture, biophilic design, neuroarchitecture, and wellness-centred design practices. Researchers argue that architecture should not merely provide shelter but actively shape human emotions, behaviour, and quality of life," He points out.

Ar. Akshaya Jain, Partner at Akshaya Jain & Associates says that contemporary architecture is increasingly recognising that successful buildings must do more than perform efficiently; they must create meaningful connections with their users. "Whether in hotels, resorts, convention centres, workplaces, or public spaces, architects are focusing on how people move through a space, interact with one another, and form memories. In many ways, today's experience-driven architecture is not a departure from Indian traditions but a continuation of them, expressed through modern materials, technologies, and spatial strategies that respond to contemporary aspirations," he points out.

Even offices are being reimagined. After the pandemic, Indian workplaces have begun prioritizing mental well-being. Corporate campuses now include biophilic design elements like indoor greenery, daylight optimization, flexible collaboration zones, and informal "pause spaces" that encourage human interaction beyond work tasks.

In all these examples, architecture is no longer just about enclosing activity—it is about orchestrating experience.

Designing for the Senses: Light, Material, and Movement

Experience-driven architecture in India is deeply tied to sensory design. Unlike purely visual architecture, this approach engages multiple senses—light, sound, texture, temperature, and even smell—to create layered environments.

Light plays a crucial role. In many contemporary Indian cultural and public buildings, architects are using controlled natural light to shape mood and rhythm throughout the day. Museums and galleries in cities like Delhi and Ahmedabad often use skylights, courtyards, and filtered openings that echo traditional Indian architectural wisdom while serving modern functions. "Light, materiality, and spatial movement are fundamental elements of sensory architecture, particularly in contemporary minimalist design. Together, they create environments that engage the senses, evoke emotions, and enrich human experience," opines Dr. Ponni.

Materials are equally important. There is a renewed appreciation for indigenous materials such as Kota stone, laterite, terracotta, lime plaster, and bamboo. These are not just sustainable choices; they also create tactile familiarity. A textured wall or a cool stone floor underfoot can evoke emotional comfort in ways polished, uniform surfaces cannot. "Materials such as stone, concrete, wood, glass, and metal respond uniquely to light, producing varied reflections, contrasts, and tactile qualities. These interactions contribute to a rich sensory experience that goes beyond visual appreciation," says Dr. Ponni

Movement through space is another key dimension. Experience-driven design often follows what can be called a "spatial narrative." Instead of direct, linear circulation, spaces are designed as journeys. A visitor may transition

from narrow, intimate passages to open, dramatic volumes, creating a rhythm of anticipation and release.

This is particularly evident in contemporary cultural institutions and public buildings in India. Museums, exhibition spaces, and even metro stations are being designed as guided experiences rather than static destinations.

According to Ar. Jain, "Light, material, and movement are not three separate instruments. They are a single instrument played in three registers simultaneously, and the quality of a building's experience depends entirely on the architect's ability to compose across all three at once."

Technology is also playing a growing role. Smart lighting systems, responsive climate controls, and interactive installations are beginning to allow spaces to adapt to users in real time. However, in the Indian context, the most successful projects are those that balance technology with cultural continuity, ensuring that innovation does not erase identity.

The Human-Centered Future of Indian Cities

The rise of experience-driven architecture in India is not just an aesthetic trend—it is a response to deeper urban challenges. Indian cities are becoming denser, faster, and more complex. In such environments, the quality of everyday experience becomes critical.

Public spaces are at the forefront of this transformation. Riverfront developments, urban parks, and revitalized public plazas are being designed not just as green patches, but as social and cultural platforms. The Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad is one example where the waterfront has been reimagined as a multi-use public realm, encouraging walking, gathering, and leisure in a previously underutilized urban edge.

At the same time, there is growing awareness that experience-driven design must also be inclusive. A truly successful space is not just visually impressive—it is accessible, safe, and comfortable for diverse users, including children, elderly citizens, and people with disabilities. This is pushing architects to think beyond iconic forms and focus on usability, circulation clarity, and emotional comfort. Dr. Ponni believes that experience-driven architecture has the potential to transform rapidly growing Indian cities into places that are more inclusive, liveable, and emotionally engaging for their diverse populations. "As urbanization accelerates, cities must evolve beyond mere infrastructure and functionality to create meaningful human experiences that foster social interaction, well-being, and a sense of belonging," she says.

Sustainability is another critical layer. In India's climate-sensitive regions, experience-driven design often overlaps with climate-responsive architecture. Courtyards that encourage ventilation, shaded corridors that reduce heat gain, and water-based cooling systems are not new ideas—they are rediscovered principles that align environmental performance with human comfort.

Looking ahead, Indian architecture is likely to become even more experience-focused. As AI, data, and responsive systems integrate into buildings, spaces may adapt dynamically to occupancy, weather, and user behaviour. But the core principle will remain unchanged: architecture is not just what we build, but what people experience within it.

Ultimately, the rise of experience-driven architecture marks a return to something deeply familiar in India—the idea that space is not separate from life, but part of it. Beyond walls, beyond structures, architecture is once again becoming a living experience. ■

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Ar. Akshaya Jain
Partner at Akshaya Jain & Associates

Image Courtesy: ArchDaily

London museum Smithfield blends heritage and sustainability

AU Staff | Mumbai

The new London Museum at Smithfield is set to become one of the UK's most significant cultural projects, combining adaptive reuse with sustainable design. Housed within the historic Victorian market buildings, the redevelopment preserves the site's architectural heritage while introducing contemporary public spaces and energy-efficient infrastructure.

Designed by Stanton Williams, Asif Khan and Julian Harrap Architects, the project transforms underutilised structures into a vibrant cultural destination expected to welcome millions of visitors annually. The museum will showcase London's history while demonstrating how historic buildings can be successfully repurposed for future generations. ■

MHADA plans INR 4 Lakh Crore redevelopment across Mumbai

AU Staff | Mumbai

MHADA has unveiled an ambitious redevelopment programme across Mumbai that could attract investments of nearly ₹4 lakh crore. Covering around 925 acres of land, the initiative aims to modernise ageing housing layouts, improve infrastructure and create new housing opportunities. Major redevelopment zones include Motilal Nagar, Charkop, Gorai and Bandra Reclamation.

The programme is expected to benefit over 75,000 residents through phased implementation over the coming years. Acting as a planning authority, MHADA intends to partner with developers under its redevelopment framework to accelerate urban renewal and optimise land use across the city. ■

Image Courtesy: Whalesbook

Century Real Estate launches 50-Acre mixed-use district

AU Staff | Mumbai

Century Real Estate has announced a 50-acre mixed-use urban development in North Bengaluru, designed to integrate residential, commercial, retail and cultural spaces within a single destination.

Located in Jakkur along the Airport Road corridor, the project will feature premium residences, Grade A office spaces, retail avenues, dining zones and public activity areas.

The development reflects the growing demand for integrated urban communities that reduce travel needs while enhancing live-work-leisure experiences. Century Real Estate expects the project to contribute significantly to Bengaluru's evolving mixed-use development landscape and strengthen the city's northern growth corridor. ■

Image Courtesy: Century

Beyond Tradition: How India's Weaving Legacy Is Finding New Expression in Contemporary Design

By **Anushka Ahuja,** Co-Founder, Studio by Agni

In an era where contemporary design is increasingly defined by authenticity, materiality, and storytelling, India's weaving heritage is finding renewed relevance. Once viewed primarily through the lens of tradition and preservation, weaving is now emerging as a dynamic force within modern interiors, influencing how architects and designers think about texture, craftsmanship, and the emotional experience of space.

For centuries, weaving has been an integral part of India's cultural identity. From the celebrated carpet looms of Bhadohi to the textile traditions of Rajasthan, generations of artisans have cultivated extraordinary skills, creating pieces that embody both technical expertise and cultural memory. Yet the enduring strength of these traditions lies not in their ability to remain unchanged, but in their capacity to evolve.

Today's design landscape is increasingly moving away from standardisation and mass production. Homeowners and designers alike are seeking spaces that feel personal, layered, and deeply connected to the people who inhabit them. In this context, handcrafted textiles and carpets are no longer considered mere decorative elements. Instead, they have become foundational design components that contribute warmth, character, and a sense of individuality to a space.

This shift is particularly evident in the role rugs now play within contemporary interiors. Rather than being selected at the final stage of a project, they are often used to establish a design direction from the outset. Through colour, texture, and materiality, a handcrafted rug can anchor a room, define spatial relationships, and create a visual language that informs the rest of the design scheme. The subtle irregularities inherent in handmade production bring depth and authenticity that cannot be replicated through industrial manufacturing.

What is especially exciting is how traditional weaving techniques are being reinterpreted for modern contexts. Designers are moving beyond conventional motifs and experimenting with abstract forms, tonal palettes, and sculptural textures. Heritage craftsmanship is being applied to minimalist residences, hospitality spaces, and contemporary architectural projects, demonstrating that traditional techniques can be remarkably versatile when viewed through a modern lens.

Material innovation has further expanded these possibilities. Natural fibres such as New Zealand wool, bamboo silk, tencel, and hand-carded wool are being combined with age-old weaving methods to create products that feel both contemporary and timeless. These materials not only offer rich tactile experiences but also reflect a growing preference for natural, thoughtfully sourced components within interior environments.

At Studio by Agni, we have witnessed this evolution firsthand. Working closely with artisan communities, we see how traditional knowledge continues to adapt to changing design sensibilities while retaining its core essence. As someone working within a family-founded business, I often reflect on the relationship between legacy and reinvention. During a conversation with Shivani Bagdai, Founder of TriChambers, a consultancy that works closely with family enterprises across sectors, including home décor and manufacturing, on succession planning, governance, and leadership transitions, shares an insight that resonated deeply: enduring legacies survive because each generation reinterprets them for its time. The same principle applies to India's weaving communities and family-led craft businesses, whose continued relevance stems from their ability to innovate while honouring inherited knowledge and craftsmanship. This balance between continuity and change is what makes India's weaving heritage so compelling within contemporary design. It is not simply a story of preservation, but one of transformation. By embracing new materials, evolving aesthetics, and collaborative approaches, artisans and designers are ensuring that traditional craftsmanship remains an active contributor to the future of design.

As architects and designers continue to seek meaningful ways to create distinctive spaces, India's weaving traditions offer an important reminder: innovation does not always come from abandoning the past. Often, it emerges from understanding tradition deeply enough to reimagine it for the future. ■

***Anushka Ahuja** is the Co-Founder of Studio by Agni, a design-led carpet and furnishings brand rooted in India's rich weaving heritage. Working closely with artisan communities across Bhadohi and Jaipur, she is passionate about preserving traditional craftsmanship while exploring its relevance within contemporary design and modern living spaces.*

‘Today’s Homebuyers Seek Convenience and Self-Sustaining Communities’

Arkade Developers has consistently focused on delivering premium residential and commercial developments that combine quality construction, contemporary architecture and efficient space planning with the convenience of well-established neighbourhoods, says **Amit Jain, CMD, Arkade Developers**, in conversation with **Prasenjit Chakraborty**.

Q What inspired the concept behind Arkade Sapphire, and how does the project reflect Arkade Developers’ vision for premium urban living in Mumbai’s evolving residential landscape?

This project is a strong reflection of Arkade Developers’ vision of creating thoughtfully designed homes that elevate the urban living experience. As Mumbai’s residential landscape evolves, homebuyers are increasingly seeking more than just a residence—they are looking for well-connected locations, superior design, lifestyle amenities, and a sense of community.

Our focus has always been on delivering premium developments that combine quality construction, contemporary architecture, and efficient space planning with the convenience of established neighbourhoods. This project embodies that philosophy by offering residents an enhanced quality of life while remaining deeply connected to the city’s social and infrastructure ecosystem.

We believe the future of Mumbai’s housing market will be driven by discerning buyers who value comfort, convenience, and long-term value. Through projects such as this, Arkade Developers continues to contribute to the transformation of the city’s residential landscape by creating homes that are aspirational, sustainable, and aligned with the evolving needs of urban families.

Q Santacruz West is one of Mumbai’s most sought-after residential destinations. What factors influenced your decision to launch Arkade Sapphire in this area, and what demand trends are you seeing among homebuyers here?

Santacruz West is one of Mumbai’s most sought-after and well-established residential destinations, consistently attracting demand from both end-users and investors. Its appeal lies in the rare combination of excellent connectivity, robust social infrastructure, and a well-developed neighbourhood ecosystem that has evolved over decades.

The locality enjoys seamless access to key commercial hubs such as Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Andheri, Lower Parel, and the domestic and international airports, making it particularly attractive for professionals and business families. At the same time, residents benefit from a wide range of reputed educational institutions, healthcare facilities, retail destinations, dining establishments, and recreational amenities, all within close proximity.

What truly differentiates Santacruz West is its balance between urban convenience and residential charm. Unlike many emerging micro-markets, it offers a mature and vibrant community environment with established social networks, tree-lined streets, and a distinct neighbourhood identity. This has made it a preferred destination for families seeking long-term residences rather than purely investment-driven purchases.

In recent years, redevelopment has further enhanced the area’s residential profile by introducing modern, premium housing while retaining the advantages of a well-established location. As homebuyers increasingly prioritize quality of life, larger living spaces, and proximity

to everyday conveniences, Santacruz West continues to strengthen its position as one of Mumbai's most desirable residential addresses.

The sustained demand for homes in the locality underscores the enduring value of established neighbourhoods, where connectivity, infrastructure, lifestyle, and community come together to create a compelling proposition for premium urban living.

Q Arkade Sapphire combines exclusive 3 Bed Suites with curated retail spaces. How does this mixed-use approach enhance the overall value proposition for residents and contribute to the neighbourhood ecosystem?

The people who live at Arkade Sapphire get to enjoy a nice place to call home. This is because the homes are close to shops and services that people need every day.

People who buy homes nowadays want to be able to walk to places like stores and restaurants. They want to be able to get the things they need without having to go far from their homes.

At Arkade Sapphire the people in charge made sure that the shops and homes work together. The people who live there can easily get the things they need. The neighbourhood also gets to have some shops that make the area a nicer place to live.

This way of building homes and shops is good because it makes it easier for people to walk around. It also helps people in the neighbourhood get to know each other. Arkade Sapphire becomes a fun and lively place to live.

When you think about it from an investment point of view buildings like Arkade Sapphire are an idea. They make the area more valuable over time because the homes and shops work together.

Our goal was to make a place that's great for the people who live there. We also wanted to make sure that Arkade Sapphire is an addition, to the whole neighbourhood.

Q Wellness and lifestyle amenities are increasingly becoming central to residential developments. How have this changing consumer preferences influenced the planning and design of Arkade Sapphire?

Arkade Sapphire has been conceptualised as more than just a residential development; it is designed to create a holistic urban living experience. The integration of exclusive 3 Bed Suites with thoughtfully curated retail spaces enhances convenience, accessibility, and overall quality of life for residents by bringing essential services and lifestyle offerings closer to home.

Today's homebuyers increasingly value developments that reduce travel time for everyday needs while fostering a vibrant and self-sustaining community environment. The retail component is intended to complement the residential offering by introducing carefully selected brands and services that cater to residents' daily requirements and lifestyle preferences. This creates a more engaging and dynamic living ecosystem while preserving the exclusivity of the residential experience.

Well-planned mixed-use developments have the ability to enhance the character of a locality by seamlessly combining living, convenience, and community interaction within a single address.

For residents, this translates into greater convenience, improved lifestyle experiences, and stronger long-term value. This aligns with Arkade Developers' vision of creating future-ready developments that respond to the changing expectations of modern homebuyers while contributing positively to the city's residential landscape.

Q Given Arkade Developers' track record of timely project delivery, what construction, technology, and project management strategies will be employed to ensure Arkade Sapphire is delivered to the promised quality and timelines?

With a legacy spanning 4 decades, 5.5+ MN sq ft of area developed and over 5500 happy families. Timely delivery and quality execution have always been central to Arkade Developers' philosophy, and Arkade Sapphire will be guided by the same disciplined approach. From the outset, the project has been planned with a strong focus on construction efficiency, rigorous quality control, and proactive project management to ensure that delivery commitments are met without compromising on standards.

A key aspect of our execution strategy is detailed project planning and milestone-based monitoring, supported by robust procurement and vendor management processes. We work closely with reputed consultants, contractors, and supply partners to ensure that materials, resources, and construction activities are aligned with project schedules. Regular reviews and real-time tracking mechanisms enable us to identify potential challenges early and take corrective action well in advance.

On the technology front, we continue to leverage modern construction methodologies, digital project monitoring tools, and data-driven reporting systems that provide greater visibility into project progress, quality benchmarks, and resource utilization. ■

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From Transit Corridor to Lifestyle Destination: Ascenta's Vision for Mumbai 3.0

Mumbai-Pune Corridor- a new chapter of growth

As the Mumbai-Pune corridor emerges as the next frontier of growth, developers are reimagining luxury living beyond conventional real estate. In a conversation with **Tejaswini Paranjape, Karan Bahl, Founder and Director, Ascenta Developers**, shares his vision for Mumbai 3.0, the rise of hospitality-led communities, and how experiences, wellness and community are shaping the future of second-home living.

As infrastructure reshapes the Mumbai-Pune corridor, a new chapter of growth is unfolding beyond city limits. At the heart of this transformation is a shift in how affluent buyers perceive luxury, wellness and community. For Karan and the team at Ascenta Developers, Mumbai 3.0 represents not merely a real estate opportunity, but a chance to redefine the experience of living itself.

For decades, the stretch between Mumbai and Pune served primarily as a route connecting two of Maharashtra's most powerful economic centres. Today, however, that geography is being reimagined. New infrastructure projects, improved connectivity and evolving lifestyle aspirations are converging to create what many industry observers describe as Mumbai 3.0—the region's next major growth corridor.

Yet, while conversations around Mumbai 3.0 often focus on airports, highways, metro connectivity and investment potential, a more profound transformation is taking place beneath the surface. The region is witnessing a shift in consumer behaviour, one that is redefining how luxury living is perceived and experienced.

For Karan, this shift was visible long before Mumbai 3.0 became a buzzword.

According to him, modern luxury buyers are no longer evaluating properties solely on location, size or specifications. Instead, they are increasingly prioritising experiences, wellness, privacy and convenience. The aspiration is no longer just to own a home; it is to enjoy a lifestyle that balances comfort, nature and meaningful experiences.

This change in mindset has contributed significantly to the growing popularity of managed farmhouse and villa communities. As urban centres become denser and lifestyles more demanding, affluent homebuyers are seeking spaces that allow them to disconnect without sacrificing convenience.

"People are looking for a complete experience," says Karan. "They want open spaces, cleaner environments, personalised services and the assurance that everything is taken care of when they arrive."

This demand has become particularly relevant in the emerging Mumbai-Pune corridor, where improved infrastructure has dramatically reduced travel times. Destinations that were once perceived as remote are now within comfortable reach of both cities.

Experiences create destination

For Ascenta, the opportunity lies not merely in building homes within this corridor, but in helping shape what the corridor itself becomes.

The company's vision is rooted in a simple observation: infrastructure may create access, but it is experiences that

create destinations.

This philosophy is reflected in the company's hospitality-led approach to development. While traditional real estate models often conclude with project delivery and handover, Ascenta is attempting to blur the boundaries between residential development and hospitality management.

The objective is not simply to provide a home, but to create an environment where residents experience the ease and comfort traditionally associated with premium hospitality brands.

Services

Services such as housekeeping support, property maintenance and curated experiences are designed to remove the operational burdens often associated with second-home ownership. For many buyers, this represents a significant shift from conventional real estate offerings.

The concept is particularly relevant in the managed villa segment, where owners may use their properties periodically rather than as primary residences. By introducing hospitality-inspired management systems, Ascenta seeks to ensure that residents can focus on enjoying their homes rather than maintaining them. However, the company's ambitions extend beyond services alone.

Building Communities

One of the recurring themes in Karan's vision is community building. He believes that long-term value is created not merely through construction, but through the relationships, experiences and interactions that develop over time.

This thinking has influenced the way Ascenta approaches planning and programming within its developments. Open spaces, wellness-oriented environments, recreational amenities and community-driven activities are envisioned as essential components rather than supplementary features.

The goal is to create places where people genuinely want to spend time—places that encourage interaction, foster belonging and generate lasting memories.

In many ways, this approach reflects a broader evolution within the luxury real estate sector. Across global markets, developers are increasingly recognising that consumers are seeking emotional value alongside financial value. Buyers are no longer investing solely in physical assets; they are investing in experiences, convenience and quality of life.

Ascenta's response to this trend has been to position itself at the intersection of real estate and hospitality.

Traditional, yet Urban

It is a strategy that aligns closely with the emerging identity of Mumbai 3.0 itself. As connectivity continues to shrink distances between Mumbai and Pune, the region is becoming more than a transit corridor. It is evolving into a lifestyle destination capable of attracting investors, second-home buyers and families seeking alternatives to traditional urban living. For Karan, the opportunity lies in anticipating that future and creating products that respond to it.

As Mumbai 3.0 continues to take shape, its success will ultimately be measured not only by the roads, airports and infrastructure that connect people, but also by the communities and experiences that encourage them to stay. By combining hospitality, wellness and long-term stewardship with real estate development, Ascenta is seeking to contribute to that larger narrative.

If infrastructure is laying the foundation for Mumbai 3.0, companies like Ascenta are attempting to define how life within that future corridor will be experienced. And in that ambition lies a vision that extends well beyond bricks and mortar. ■

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Emerging Trends in Biophilic Design in Office Spaces

By **Maanoj Tomar,** Founder, AFC Furniture Solutions

For years, workplace design was measured by a simple equation- fit more people into less space, keep costs under control, and ensure projects are delivered on time. Employee wellbeing rarely entered the conversation.

Today, that equation no longer works. The modern workplace is facing a challenge that has little to do with real estate and everything to do with human performance. Across industries, organisations are grappling with rising stress levels, burnout, disengagement which thereby leads to declining attention spans. Office is no longer being evaluated on how efficiently it accommodates employees, but on how effectively it enables them to perform.

This is precisely why biophilic design has moved from the fringes of workplace planning to the centre of boardroom discussions. Yet, one of the biggest misconceptions surrounding biophilia is that it is about adding a few plants to an office. That interpretation dramatically understates its value.

At its core, biophilic design is about recreating the environmental conditions humans are naturally wired to thrive in. Access to daylight, visual connection to nature, organic materials, natural textures, healthier air quality, acoustic comfort, and spatial layouts that reduce cognitive fatigue all contribute to creating workplaces that actively support wellbeing.

The numbers are difficult to ignore. Global research indicates that workplaces designed around biophilic principles can improve employee wellbeing by up to 15% and productivity by leaps. Recent studies in India suggest even stronger outcomes, with organisations reporting significant reductions in workplace stress and measurable improvements in employee satisfaction and mental wellbeing.

This growing evidence is fundamentally changing how companies view office investments. Wellness is no longer being treated as an employee benefit; it is increasingly viewed as a business performance lever. The shift is particularly visible among GCCs, technology firms, and multinational organisations establishing large campuses in India. These companies are not merely seeking attractive offices. They are looking to create environments that improve focus, support collaboration, enhance creativity, and strengthen talent retention. This is also reflected in the rising adoption of wellness-led frameworks such as WELL and IGBC certifications across India's commercial real estate sector.

What is particularly interesting is the role furniture now plays in this evolution. Furniture has become one of the most direct touchpoints between people and their work environment. The materials employees interact with, the ergonomics supporting their posture, the flexibility of collaborative settings, and the integration of natural finishes all influence how individuals feel and perform throughout the day.

As a result, the conversations we are having with clients today are markedly different from those we were having even five years ago. Organisations are prioritising low-emission materials, natural finishes, adaptive workstations, acoustic solutions, and furniture systems that contribute to healthier workplace ecosystems rather than simply filling floor space.

The future of workplace design will be defined by how effectively spaces support human health, cognition, and productivity. In many ways, biophilic design is not really about bringing nature into offices rather bringing workplaces closer to the conditions under which people perform at their best. And as India continues to emerge as a global hub for innovation and knowledge work, that distinction will become increasingly important. ■

***Maanoj Tomar** is the Founder and Director of AFC Furniture Solutions, one of India's leading modular office furniture brands. With 18+ years of experience, he has grown AFC Furniture Solutions to a nationally acclaimed manufacturer with 4 lakh sq. ft. of production capacity, serving Fortune 500 companies and leading Indian enterprises.*

Warehouse Roofing: Innovation & Technology Shaping the Future

Smart technologies, sustainable materials, and renewable energy solutions are transforming warehouse roofing into a strategic asset for modern operations.

Warehouses play an important role in modern supply chains, serving as storage, distribution, and operational hubs across industries such as manufacturing, logistics, e-commerce, and agriculture. One of the most important structural elements of any warehouse is its roof. A well-designed roofing system ensures protection of goods, enhances operational efficiency, and contributes to long-term cost savings.

As warehouse operations become more advanced and technology-driven, roofing systems are also undergoing significant transformation. Modern warehouse roofing is no longer limited to providing shelter from weather conditions. Today, innovative roofing technologies are helping businesses improve energy efficiency, reduce maintenance costs, enhance sustainability, and support smart building operations.

One of the most significant developments in warehouse roofing is the adoption of energy-efficient roofing materials. Reflective roofing membranes, commonly known as cool roofs, are designed to reflect sunlight and reduce heat absorption. This helps maintain comfortable indoor temperatures and lowers the demand for air conditioning systems, resulting in substantial energy savings. Advanced roofing materials such as Thermoplastic Polyolefin (TPO) and Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) membranes have gained popularity due to their durability, weather resistance, and high reflectivity.

Another major innovation is the integration of solar energy systems into warehouse roofs. Large warehouse buildings often have extensive roof space, making them ideal locations for solar panel installations. Solar-integrated roofing solutions allow businesses to generate renewable energy on-site, reducing electricity costs and supporting sustainability goals. In many cases, warehouses can produce a significant portion of their energy requirements through rooftop solar systems, creating both environmental and economic benefits.

The rise of smart roofing technology is also transforming warehouse management. Internet of Things (IoT) sensors can now be embedded within roofing systems to monitor temperature, moisture levels, structural movement, and weather-related stress. These sensors provide real-time data that enables facility managers to detect potential problems before they become costly repairs. Early leak detection, for example, can prevent inventory damage and reduce maintenance expenses.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is further enhancing roof management through predictive maintenance. AI-powered software can analyse data collected from sensors, drones, and inspections to identify patterns of wear and deterioration. Instead of relying on routine inspections alone, warehouse operators can predict roofing issues and schedule maintenance proactively. This approach minimizes downtime and extends the lifespan of roofing systems.

Drone technology has also become an important tool for warehouse roof inspections. Traditional roof inspections can be time-consuming, expensive, and potentially hazardous. Drones equipped with high-resolution cameras and thermal imaging systems can quickly survey large roof areas, identify damage, and generate detailed reports. This improves safety while providing more accurate assessments.

Sustainability is another key driver of innovation in warehouse roofing. Green roofing solutions, recyclable materials, rainwater harvesting systems, and environmentally friendly insulation products are increasingly being incorporated into modern warehouse designs. These features help organizations meet environmental standards and reduce their carbon footprint.

Looking ahead, warehouse roofing is expected to become even more intelligent and integrated with building management systems. Digital twins, automated monitoring platforms, and self-healing roofing materials are emerging technologies that promise greater efficiency and resilience. As warehouses continue to evolve to meet the demands of modern commerce, innovative roofing solutions will play a crucial role in improving performance, sustainability, and long-term operational success. ■

Can Redevelopment Become India's Biggest Urban Opportunity?

By **Ankita Luharuka,** CEO, Alliance City Developers

India's urban story is entering a defining decade. As cities grow and ambitions develop, the question is not if we need more housing but how we can make it more resilient, sustainable and for future-ready communities. For a long time, urban growth in India has been synonymous with expansion. The usual answer to increased populations and housing demand has been to build new suburbs, peripheral developments and greenfield projects. But as land becomes scarcer and infrastructural costs rise, the future of urban development may be less about expansion and more about reinventing. In that scenario, redevelopment can become one of India's biggest urban prospects.

The Challenge Facing India's Cities

According to the World Bank, India's urban population is expected to exceed 600 million by 2030. This rapid urbanisation is placing enormous pressure on land, infrastructure, transportation, and public utilities. Meanwhile, a second challenge is being faced by many of India's major cities: ageing built environments. Much of Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Pune and Bengaluru is made up of residential and commercial buildings established several decades ago. Many of these structures were intended for a totally different age, with far lower population density and quite different lifestyle needs.

Today's residents want more room, more amenities, stronger safety standards, better parking infrastructure and more sustainability. "Unfortunately, much of the current housing stock is not keeping up with these evolving expectations. This creates an unprecedented opportunity for urban renewal.

Cities Cannot Continue Expanding Indefinitely

Historically, urban expansion has been viewed as a natural response to rising demand. But infinite outward expansion produces its own problems. Greenfield development often requires enormous investments in roads, sewage systems, water supply networks and public infrastructure. It also increases travel time to work and stretches limited municipal resources even thinner. Redevelopment, on the other hand, allows cities to get the most out of existing land and infrastructure. Redevelopment is enabling the renewal and modernisation of ageing urban assets with modern, efficient, better-planned communities, not the constant

outward expansion of city limits. In many ways, it's a more rational, sustainable strategy of growth.

Mumbai Offers A Blueprint

Mumbai perhaps provides the most compelling example of redevelopment's potential. With limited land availability and one of the oldest housing stocks in the country redevelopment has become central to the city's future. According to Knight Frank India, redevelopment activity in Mumbai is expected to add nearly 44,000 homes worth approximately ₹1.3 lakh crore by 2030. More importantly, redevelopment has evolved from being a niche segment to becoming one of the primary drivers of housing supply. The lessons from Mumbai are increasingly relevant for other Indian cities. As urban centres mature and land becomes increasingly constrained, redevelopment will become less of an option and more of a necessity.

Redevelopment Is About More Than Buildings

Redevelopment is often viewed through the narrow lens of real estate. In reality, it is fundamentally an exercise in city-building. Modern redevelopment projects improve structural safety, create better open spaces, introduce energy-efficient designs and provide upgraded civic infrastructure. They make things more accessible and push for greater standards of urban living. "Redevelopment allows for a fresh approach to urban planning and design enabling the creation of safer, more sustainable and better-connected spaces." It helps planners and developers to make homes more liveable, inclusive and environmentally responsible. It's also an opportunity to embed sustainability in the urban fabric. Newer constructions can feature green building concepts, rainwater harvesting, solar energy solutions and energy efficient building technology that older buildings do not have particularly as climate resilience becomes increasingly crucial.

The Economic Multiplier Effect

The benefits of redevelopment are much more than just housing. Redevelopment unlocks the value of inactive land and produces significant economic activity across a variety of sectors. Construction, engineering, architecture, design, materials and related businesses gain from large-scale urban regeneration. The real estate sector is estimated to contribute about 7-8% to India's GDP now and is predicted to account for about 13% by 2030. Redevelopment can play a major part in enabling this expansion. Also, as India aspires to be a US$5 trillion economy, modernisation of existing urban infrastructure would be as crucial as constructing new assets.

Policy Support Will Determine The Scale Of Opportunity

For redevelopment to truly transform India's cities, policy support will be critical. Accelerating approvals, transparent regulatory frameworks, better finance channels and more coordination among stakeholders will be key. Citizen participation will be equally crucial. When residents, developers, architects, planners and policy makers work together toward a same goal, redevelopment projects succeed. Urban transformation can't be done in isolation. It requires collaboration and long-term thinking.

The Next Decade Will Belong To Urban Renewal

The future of Indian cities will not be defined solely by how much new land we develop. It will increasingly be determined by how effectively we reimagine and revitalise the assets that already exist. As India continues its urbanisation journey, redevelopment offers a rare opportunity to simultaneously address housing shortages, improve infrastructure, enhance sustainability, and elevate the quality of urban life.

In many ways redevelopment is not simply about replacing old buildings. It is about renewing cities themselves. And perhaps that is why the next great chapter of India's real estate story may not be written on the outskirts of our cities, but within their existing boundaries. Because the greatest opportunity before us may not be to build new cities—but to rebuild the ones we already have. ■

Ankita Luharuka *is the CEO of Alliance City Developers, a real estate company in Mumbai that builds modern residences that are good for the neighborhood and commercial projects as well. She Co-Founded the company alongside Sanket Luharuka, bringing a collaborative leadership approach to the business.Under her watch, the company has developed more than 19+ successful projects, which have given homes to more than 700+ happy families and added more than 1.2 million square feet of space developed. She has always made sure that projects were done on time, which is what the company stands for with the phrase "On Time EveryTime."*

India hotel investments surge 67% to USD 567 million in 2025: JLL

AU Staff | Hyderabad

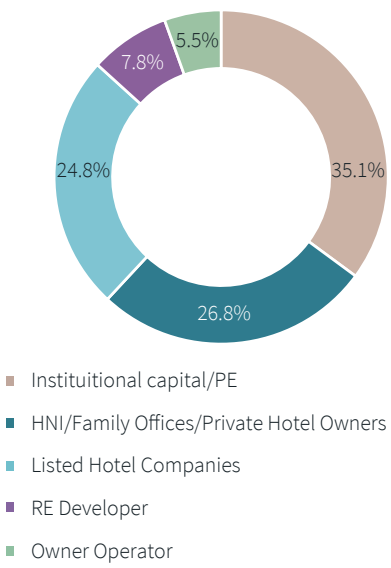
India's hotel investment market witnessed a significant upswing in 2025, with transaction volumes rising 67 per cent year-on-year to approximately USD 567 million across 28 deals, according to JLL's Hotel Investment Trends in India: 2025report.

The report highlights growing investor confidence in the hospitality sector, driven by strong operating performance, expanding travel demand, and increasing interest from institutional investors and listed hotel companies.

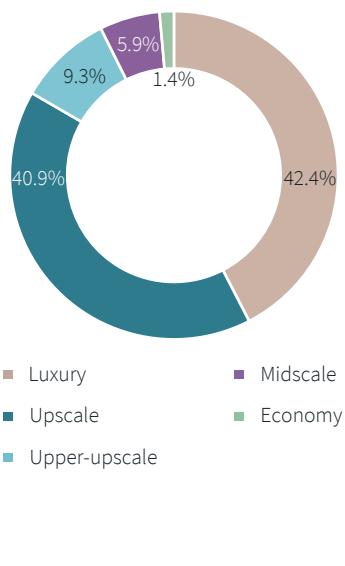
Institutional capital and private equity investors emerged as the largest contributors, accounting for 35 per cent of total transaction volumes. High-net-worth individuals (HNIs), family offices, and private hotel owners followed with a 27 per cent share, while listed hotel companies contributed 25 per cent.

Luxury and upscale assets continued to dominate investment activity, accounting for 42 per cent and 41 per cent of total transaction volumes respectively. Around 69 per cent of all deals involved operational hotels, reflecting investors' preference for income-generating assets.

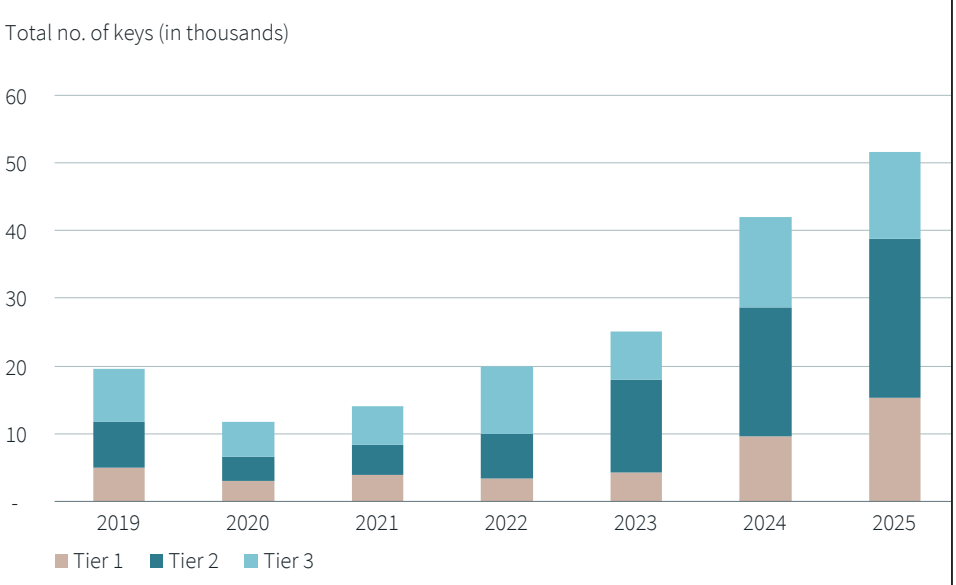
Hotel transaction volumes by source of capital (2025)

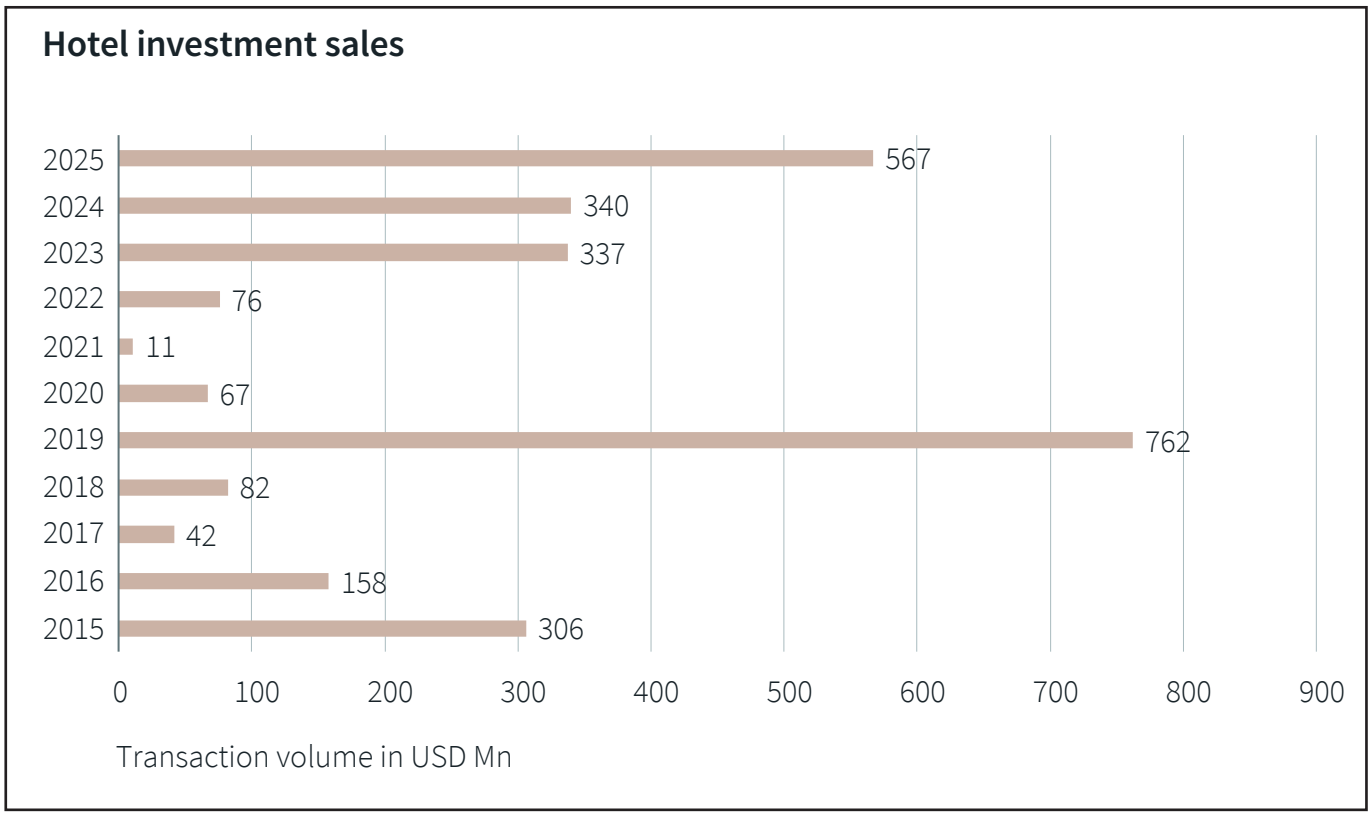


Hotel transaction volumes by segment (2025)

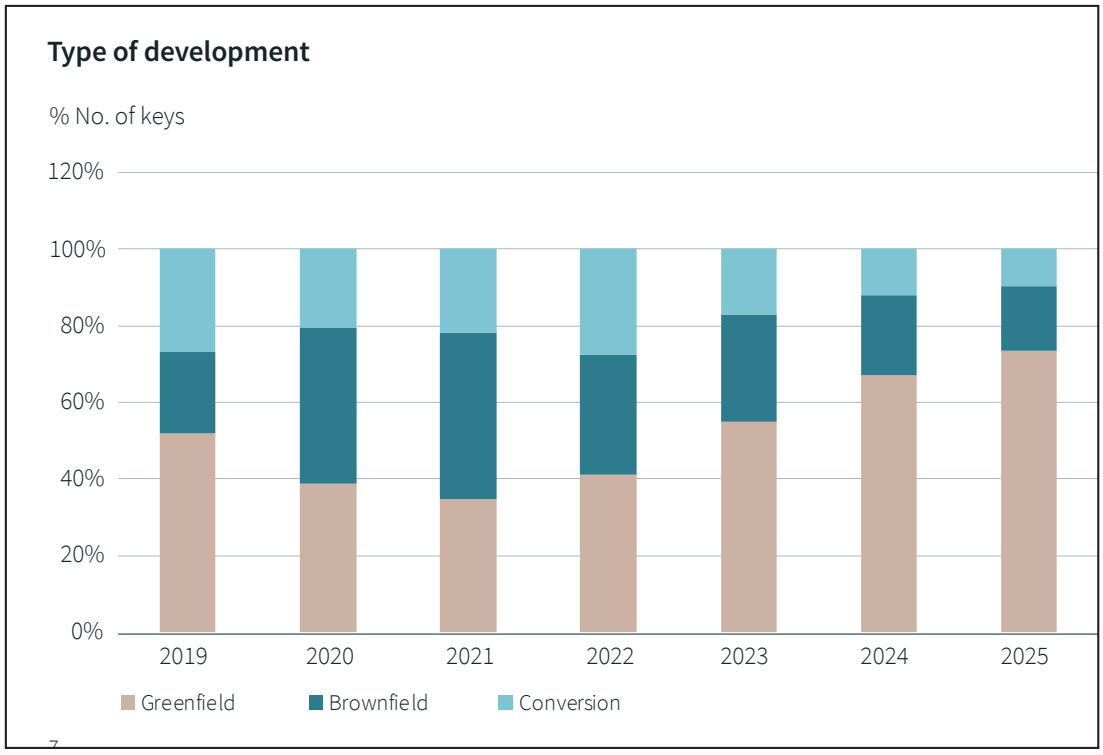


Hotel signings by tier (no. of keys)





While Tier I cities retained their dominance with nearly 60 per cent of total transaction volumes, Tier II and Tier III destinations accounted for the remaining 40 per cent, underlining the growing attractiveness of emerging hospitality markets. Key transactions included resort and hotel assets in destinations such as Rishikesh, Goa, Udaipur, Ludhiana, Nashik, Vadodara and Lonavala.



Beyond direct hotel acquisitions, 2025 also saw around USD 125 million deployed through strategic partnerships and platform investments. Notable deals included GIC and SAMHI Hotels' joint venture, Marriott International's investment in Concept Hospitality, and IHCL's acquisition of majority stakes in ANK Hotels and Pride Hospitality.

The momentum has continued into 2026, with hotel transaction volumes reaching approximately USD 185 million in the first quarter alone, marking a 58 per cent increase over Q1 2025.

According to JLL, strong liquidity, growing institutional interest, airport-led development opportunities, and tourism-focused government initiatives are expected to sustain investment activity. However, the limited availability of high-quality hotel assets could create supply constraints, leading to increased competition and premium valuations for marquee hospitality properties. ■

How High-Performance Materials Are Shaping Healthier, Smarter and More Resilient Spaces

For decades, building materials were judged by two simple criteria: how they looked and how much they cost. A beautiful façade, a stylish interior finish, an attractive flooring option or a cost-effective wall system often dictated specification decisions. Today, however, the conversation has fundamentally changed.

Materials are no longer merely the ingredients of construction. They have evolved into critical contributors to safety, wellness, sustainability, operational efficiency and long-term asset value. Whether it is a residential apartment, commercial workspace, healthcare facility or educational institution, every material selected today plays a far greater role than simply completing a structure. It influences how people experience spaces, how buildings perform over time and how responsibly they interact with the environment.

In many ways, these materials have become the invisible building blocks of human well-being.

The shift is reflective of a broader transformation within the built environment. As developers, architects and end-users become increasingly conscious of lifecycle costs, environmental impact and occupant comfort, performance-led specifications are emerging as the new benchmark. The focus has moved beyond what materials look like on Day One to how they perform over the next ten, twenty or even fifty years.

Hidden behind elegant facades, polished interiors and striking architectural forms lies a sophisticated ecosystem of materials that determines how safely a building performs, how sustainably it ages and how comfortably its occupants live, work and interact within it. As the built environment evolves to meet the demands of resilience, wellness and environmental responsibility, material selection is no longer a matter of aesthetics and cost alone. It has become a critical design and business decision that shapes the long-term value of every project. In this special feature, Tejaswini Paranjape explores how performance-led materials are redefining the future of architecture and construction, with industry leaders highlighting the growing emphasis on durability, safety, sustainability and lifecycle performance.

The Rise of Performance-Driven Design

The growing preference for performance-led materials is closely linked to changing expectations from buildings themselves.

Vijay Mishra
Commercial Director
Knauf

Modern buildings are expected to do more than provide shelter. They must ensure fire safety, support healthier indoor environments, withstand climate challenges, minimise maintenance requirements and contribute to sustainability goals. This expanded role has elevated materials from passive construction components to active design enablers.

According to Vijay Mishra, Commercial Director at Knauf, developers and architects are increasingly prioritising long-term

safety, durability, moisture management, fire performance and lifecycle value over short-term considerations. He observes that specialised building typologies and evolving regulations are further accelerating the shift towards materials that create resilient and future-ready environments.

This evolution is also altering the economics of construction. A material that costs marginally more upfront but significantly reduces maintenance, replacement and operational expenses over its lifecycle is increasingly viewed as a smarter investment.

The industry is witnessing a transition from acquisition cost to ownership value.

Materials as Strategic Business Decisions

For developers, material selection has become a strategic business decision rather than merely a procurement exercise.

In a highly competitive real estate landscape, building performance increasingly influences asset valuation, occupancy rates and customer satisfaction. Premium homebuyers, corporate occupiers and institutional clients now evaluate projects through the lens of durability, sustainability and long-term functionality.

A developer investing in superior cladding systems, fire-resistant solutions, high-performance surfaces or moisture-resistant substrates is effectively investing in the longevity of the asset. Reduced maintenance cycles, lower refurbishment costs and enhanced occupant satisfaction directly contribute to stronger lifecycle returns.

This business case is becoming particularly relevant as sustainability regulations tighten and consumers become more informed about material performance.

The result is a growing demand for products that can simultaneously deliver aesthetics, durability, safety and environmental responsibility.

Innovation Redefining Material Performance

The most significant transformation within the industry is being driven by innovation.Material manufacturers are no longer developing products that solve a single challenge. Today's solutions are increasingly expected to address multiple performance parameters simultaneously.

This has led to the emergence of integrated systems capable of delivering fire resistance, acoustic performance, moisture protection, structural reliability, durability and sustainability within a single specification framework.

Industry leaders believe this multi-functional approach will define the next generation of building materials.

Mishra notes that material innovation is shifting from standalone products towards integrated solutions that enhance lifecycle performance while improving construction efficiency and occupant comfort. The emphasis is increasingly on creating systems that support future-ready buildings rather than merely fulfilling immediate project requirements.

This convergence of technologies is helping architects and developers navigate increasingly complex project demands without compromising design aspirations.

Sustainability Moves to the Core

Perhaps no force is influencing material innovation more profoundly than sustainability.

Environmental responsibility has evolved from a desirable attribute to a fundamental expectation. Developers are under pressure to reduce embodied carbon, improve energy efficiency and align with green building standards, while end-users are increasingly seeking healthier and more environmentally conscious spaces.

This has prompted manufacturers to rethink everything from sourcing practices and manufacturing processes to product composition and recyclability.

Parul Mittal
Director, Greenlam Industries

Parul Mittal, Director at Greenlam Industries, believes the industry has moved beyond viewing sustainability as a standalone objective. Instead, it is becoming deeply integrated into product development strategies. She points to growing investments in renewable energy, responsible sourcing, water conservation, low-emission manufacturing and environmentally certified products that enable architects and developers to make sustainable choices without sacrificing performance.

The emphasis is increasingly on materials that can demonstrate measurable environmental benefits

throughout their lifecycle.

As sustainability metrics become more sophisticated, transparency, certifications and accountability are expected to become just as important as technical specifications.

The Safety Imperative

Among the various performance criteria influencing material choices, fire safety has emerged as one of the most critical.

Recent incidents across the globe have intensified scrutiny around building safety, prompting stricter regulations and greater awareness among stakeholders. Consequently, fire-resistant materials are rapidly transitioning from optional upgrades to essential specifications.

Manufacturers are responding by integrating advanced fire-performance capabilities across product categories ranging from laminates and plywood to doors, partitions and wall systems.

The growing focus on safety reflects a larger industry shift: performance can no longer be separated from responsibility. Buildings are expected not only to look impressive but also to protect occupants under adverse conditions. This expectation is redefining how materials are evaluated and specified across sectors.

Designing for Durability

Another major trend shaping material development is the pursuit of longevity.

The industry increasingly recognises that durability is among the most sustainable characteristics a product can possess. Materials that last longer reduce replacement cycles, minimise resource consumption and lower maintenance demands.

Tushar Verma, Executive Vice President at REHAU India and Subcon, observes that architects, developers and homeowners are now evaluating products based on their long-term performance rather than their purchase price alone. Materials that resist scratches, moisture, abrasion, UV exposure and daily wear while retaining their appearance significantly improve ownership economics.

The growing popularity of anti-fingerprint surfaces, colour-stable finishes, moisture-resistant components and abrasion-resistant materials reflects this changing mindset.

Durability is no longer viewed as a technical specification. It has become a value proposition.

The Future of High-Performance Materials

Looking ahead, industry experts agree that the definition of a high-performance material will continue to expand.

Tomorrow's materials will be expected to simultaneously deliver functionality, sustainability, safety, design flexibility and lifecycle value. They will need to demonstrate measurable performance rather than rely on marketing claims. Architects and developers will increasingly demand transparency regarding sourcing, certifications, environmental impact and long-term reliability.

The future will belong to solutions that combine technological innovation with accountability.

For manufacturers, this presents both an opportunity and a challenge. Success will depend not only on creating products that perform exceptionally but also on proving those performance claims through rigorous testing, certifications and real-world results.

Tushar Verma
Executive Vice President,
REHAU India and Subcon

Building Well-Being from the Ground Up

The evolution of building materials tells a larger story about the future of architecture and construction.

As cities grow denser, climate pressures intensify and user expectations rise, materials are assuming responsibilities that extend far beyond structure and aesthetics. They are becoming guardians of safety, enablers of sustainability, contributors to wellness and drivers of long-term value.

In this new era, the most important materials may not always be the most visible ones. Yet they will be the elements quietly shaping how people live, work, heal, learn and interact with their surroundings.

The industry's shift towards performance-led specifications signals a simple but powerful truth: the future of great buildings will be determined not only by how they look, but by how intelligently they perform. And at the heart of that future are the materials that make it possible. ■

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Hospitality-led commercial hubs must also be resource-efficient as Mumbai's realty market moves towards smarter urban development

By **Purvesh Sarnaik,** Director, Vihang Ahead

Mumbai's commercial future is increasingly being written in its peripheral micro-markets. For years, areas such as Mira Bhayandar grew as bedroom communities, absorbing housing demand from the city's core while sending working populations back towards Mumbai every morning. That model is now giving way to a more layered urban proposition, where residential, retail, hospitality, business travel and social infrastructure are expected to sit within the same connected geography.

Connectivity Is Rewriting the Periphery

The change is being pushed first by infrastructure. Metro Line 9, planned as an extension from Dahisar East to Mira Bhayandar, has already made the corridor more legible for long-term development; recent coverage noted MMRDA's plan for seven footover bridges along the 11-km corridor to improve direct access to stations. The Versova-Bhayandar Coastal Road North, a 26.3-km project connecting Mumbai to Mira Bhayandar, is expected to strengthen the western edge, while the Thane-Borivali twin tunnel is being positioned as a major east-west connector, with reports noting that it could cut the Thane-Borivali commute significantly.

These projects alter the old centre-periphery relationship. Once commute uncertainty diminishes, land use is not limited to low-margin residential supply. Developers begin to look at higher-yield commercial formats, and buyers begin to expect daily convenience closer to home. Mira Bhayandar can mature from an outward-commuting market into a self-sustaining hub without repeating the resource-heavy mistakes of older urban clusters.

Hospitality Is Becoming the New Urban Layer

The hospitality layer is already influencing how new developments are being conceived. Residential projects are no longer competing only on carpet area, location and basic amenities. Buyers increasingly respond to branded clubhouses, concierge-style services, wellness-led common areas, curated dining zones and spaces that feel professionally managed. In that sense, hospitality is not restricted to hotels; it is becoming a design language for everyday urban life.

For Mira Bhayandar, this shift has particular relevance. Its location between Mumbai, Thane and Palghar makes it suitable for social events, banquets, business hotels and serviced apartments that do not need to sit inside the city's most expensive districts. A well-planned mixed-use hub can serve residents, visiting professionals, wedding guests, conference audiences and neighbourhood users within the same ecosystem. That diversity creates the "stay, work, meet and celebrate" character that older single-use residential clusters lacked.

The Resource Question Cannot Be Deferred

The danger is that hospitality-led development can easily become resource-heavy if the planning remains superficial. Hotels, banquet halls, restaurants, and clubs operate longer hours than office buildings, and their service requirements are more demanding. Cooling, kitchen exhaust, water, waste, deliveries, parking and service circulation all place pressure on the asset. If these systems are treated as technical adjustments after the architectural vision is complete, the development may look premium but operate inefficiently.

Resource efficiency must therefore sit inside the first brief. A mixed-use hub has different peaks through the day, from morning movement and office traffic to evening dining and events. The design has to anticipate these rhythms through shaded pedestrian routes, efficient façades, HVAC zoning, treated-water reuse, organic waste management, service segregation and EV-ready access. These choices may not always be visible to the visitor, but they decide whether the precinct remains efficient after its novelty fades.

Efficiency Has Become Part of Value Creation

The commercial argument for this approach is gaining strength. The financial case for doing this is visible. A 2025 CREDAI-Colliers report noted that green-certified office buildings record 80% to 90% occupancy and can command rental premiums of up to 25 percent. CRISIL Ratings also noted that LEED-certified buildings can deliver 25% to 30% energy savings and 11% water savings compared with traditional buildings. For hospitality-led assets, those numbers can determine whether the development remains competitive after the first cycle of novelty fades.

Mira Bhayandar's opportunity lies in avoiding the mistakes of older commercial clusters. It can move from a monofunctional residential identity towards a more balanced urban model, but that shift should not be measured only by premium amenities or larger mixed-use formats. The real test will be whether these hubs create internal economic activity while remaining light on resources. Mumbai's next generation of commercial destinations must feel generous in experience and restrained in consumption; that is where smarter development will find its real urban credibility. ■

‘Architects and Developers Are Driving the Dry Construction Shift’

Knauf Drystar is set to play a key role in shaping the future of wet-area design across healthcare, hospitality, and public infrastructure projects. Describing the product as a high-performance fibre-reinforced gypsum board engineered for interior dry construction systems exposed to high humidity, moisture, and intermittent water contact, **Sumit Bidani, CEO of Knauf India**, shares his insights in a conversation with **Prasenjit Chakraborty**.

Q Moisture, mould resistance, and fire safety are becoming critical concerns in modern buildings. What market gaps or emerging construction challenges prompted Knauf India to develop and introduce Drystar for the Indian market?

The launch of Knauf Drystar was backed by our market research which threw a light on the growing need for building materials that are able to address some of the key challenges in modern construction such as mould, moisture, termite resistance and fire-safety, in an effective manner. Traditional ceiling and wall solutions are often faced with drawbacks in wet and high-humidity environments or areas such as healthcare facilities, washrooms, and public infrastructure, resulting in developers increasingly focussing on the creation of hygienic, durable, and future-ready buildings.

At Knauf India, we successfully identified a market gap that exists for a specialised drywall solution, blending mould protection, resistance to moisture, fire performance, and durability without lowering design flexibility and efficiency of installation.

Q Indian architects and developers are increasingly adopting dry construction technologies. How do you see products like Drystar influencing the future of wet-area design in sectors such as hospitality, healthcare,

residential, and public infrastructure?

Knauf Drystar will play an important role in defining wet-area design across healthcare, public infrastructure and hospitality projects. Knauf Drystar is a high-performance fibre-reinforced gypsum board that has been developed for use in interior dry construction systems that are exposed to high-humidity, moisture, and intermittent water contact. The board amalgamates a moisture-resistant glass-fleece surface with a specially engineered gypsum core, enabling advanced protection against water absorption and mould formation, it combines features such as durability, mould protection, fire performance, and moisture resistance within a dry construction system. This allows developers and architects to design wet areas with more confidence, at the same time benefit from the flexibility, efficiency, and speed of the modern drywall construction.

Q Drystar combines moisture resistance, mould protection, and fire performance in a single system. How important is this integrated approach in helping architects and contractors achieve both design flexibility and long-term building performance?

The integrated approach of blending moisture resistance, mould protection, and fire performance in a single system play an instrumental role in modern construction projects that demand safety, durability, and design versatility. By the adoption of this approach, we help architects, contractors in creating flexible, high-performance, spaces while augmenting lifecycle performance, lowering maintenance concerns, and fulfilling the requirements for wet-area and high-humidity environments.

Q Sustainability is now a key consideration in material selection. How does Drystar align with Knauf India's broader vision of promoting resource-efficient, durable, and future-ready construction practices?

At present, sustainability goes beyond environmental considerations to include resource efficiency, durability, as well as long-term building performance. Knauf Drystar aligns with our vision of delivering a high-performance drywall solution designed to tolerate humidity, moisture, termite and mould growth, and fire-related risks. This expands the lifespan of interior systems and reduces maintenance needs.

Q As India's construction sector evolves rapidly, what innovations and trends do you believe will shape the next generation of interior building systems, and how is Knauf preparing to address these opportunities?

With developers and architects increasingly adopting dry construction technologies, there is a clear transition towards solutions that deliver long-term performance while decreasing maintenance and construction time requirements. Knauf Drystar reflects our focus on the development of future-ready building systems that combine safety, performance, sustainability, flexibility

for fulfilling or meeting the evolving requirements of healthcare, hospitality, public infrastructure, residential, and commercial projects.

At Knauf India, we are of the view that the future of interior building systems is driven by construction efficiency, high-performance materials, and sustainability. With buildings turning into more environmentally conscious and smarter, there is an increasing demand for solutions offering fire resistance, superior acoustics, energy efficiency, and indoor air quality, while helping in faster project implementation.

Our portfolio involves advanced drywall systems and gypsum boards, which are designed for fulfilling the diversified requirements of modern healthcare, educational, residential, hospitality, commercial projects. For instance, our FireBloc gypsum boards are designed to augment fire protection in critical regions, while Drystar boards offer high-quality performance in humid environments including washrooms and kitchens. Besides, our Echobloc acoustic wall and ceiling solutions help in improving indoor comfort by contributing to enhanced air quality and lowering noise levels. We are constantly working towards reducing the environmental footprint of our products through efficient manufacturing processes, responsible sourcing, and greater usage of recyclable materials. Our lightweight ceiling and drywall systems need lower amounts of water, generating construction waste to a lesser extent, in comparison to the conventional building methods, which support greener construction practices. ■

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‘Three Decades of Human-Centered Design’

Seema Agrawal, Chairperson, IIID Nagpur Chapter, speaks to **Tejaswini Paranjape** about her three-decade journey in interior design, blending Vastu principles with contemporary aesthetics, lessons from heritage renovation, and her vision for nurturing the next generation of designers.

Q Having designed over 1,000 projects across three decades, what is the one principle of good design that has remained unchanged despite evolving trends and technologies?

The one principle that has remained constant is human-centered design. Trends, materials, and technologies continue to evolve, but design must ultimately serve people. A space succeeds when it responds to the user’s needs, enhances comfort, and improves everyday living. While aesthetics may change with time, usefulness remains timeless. Good design should always have a purpose and create a meaningful experience for those who inhabit it.

Q Your practice uniquely combines interior design with Vastu consultancy. How do you balance traditional wisdom with the functional demands of contemporary living spaces?

Balancing Vastu Shastra with modern design is about creating harmony between traditional principles and contemporary lifestyles. Vastu focuses on energy flow, orientation, and spatial balance, while modern design emphasizes functionality, aesthetics, and technology.

The challenge is to integrate both seamlessly. In homes where layouts are fixed, we use colour, lighting, materials, and planning strategies to align with Vastu principles. Smart storage, modular furniture, and modern conveniences can be incorporated without disturbing spatial balance. Natural materials and subtle traditional elements help create spaces that feel contemporary while remaining culturally connected.

Q One of your notable achievements was the successful renovation of a 1965 load-bearing residence. What did that project teach you about preserving the past while designing for the future?

That project reinforced the idea that the past is not something to overcome but something to build upon. The home carried the craftsmanship, materials, and values of its era, and preserving those elements became central to the design process.

The load-bearing structure imposed limitations, but rather than treating them as obstacles, we embraced them as defining features. Reusing materials reduced waste and respected the home’s history, proving that preservation itself can be sustainable. The experience highlighted how architecture can create a meaningful dialogue between heritage and modern living.

Q As Chairperson of IIID Nagpur Chapter, what key initiatives are you prioritising to strengthen the professional growth and visibility of interior designers in the region?

My focus is on creating stronger opportunities for learning, collaboration, and professional visibility. IIID brings together architects, interior designers, allied professionals, traders, and students, creating a vibrant platform for knowledge-sharing.

We work closely with design institutions to help students become industry-ready. Programmes such as Spaces Ki Kahani allow designers to present their work and share their design journeys. Workshops, factory visits, and hands-on learning sessions expose members to new materials, technologies, and practices.

Our recent event, Showcase, combined exhibitions, presentations, workshops, material knowledge sessions, and panel discussions, creating a comprehensive learning platform for the design community. We are also strengthening IIID Nagpur’s digital presence and encouraging members to contribute to journals and publications, helping build greater visibility and thought leadership. ■

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Seema Agrawal is Chairperson of IIID Nagpur Chapter and proprietor of New Dimension, Nagpur. A practicing interior designer and Vastu consultant for over 30 years, she holds a B.Tech in Interior Design, a PGDVV in Vedic Vastu, and a PGDA in Astrology. Her firm has completed more than 1,000 residential and commercial projects across Nagpur, Pune, and Mumbai. An educator, juror, and award-winning designer, she advocates sustainable, human-centered spaces that blend traditional wisdom with contemporary functionality.

3rd Edition

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Data Centre Developers, Hyperscale Operators, & Co-location Providers	Logistics, Warehousing & Cold Storage Companies	MEP Consultants, Commissioning Engineers, & Facilities Managers	Private Equity, Infrastructure Funds & Multilateral Development Banks
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‘Sculpture Is No Longer a Standalone Art Form but an Integral Part of the Built Environment’

Naresh Kumar Kumawat, Director, Matu Ram Art Centre, has redefined the relationship between sculpture and architecture through visionary large-scale public artworks, from the towering Shiva statue to the Parliament’s Samudra Manthan relief. In a conversation with **Prasenjit Chakraborty**, he discusses the art, engineering, and cultural significance behind creating monumental sculptures that transform public spaces into enduring landmarks.

Q Your sculptures often become architectural landmarks in their own right. How do you collaborate with architects, structural engineers, and urban planners to ensure that a monumental sculpture integrates seamlessly into its built environment rather than existing as a standalone object?

Collaboration is fundamental to all large-scale sculptural projects because they are only possible through utilising the combined experience and knowledge of all contributors: architects, structural engineers, urban planners, and skilled artists who are working towards a common goal. The first step is to clearly communicate the artist’s intent and the artwork’s larger conceptual context to each member of the project team.

As production of the sculpture continues, ongoing dialogue and coordination are used to ensure that the artistic vision for the artwork remains compatible with the structural, spatial, and environmental requirements relating to the construction of the artwork. The architect provides input as to how the artwork will relate to the surrounding world of constructed environments and supports the engineer in defining ways to ensure that the finished product will be safe, durable, and capable of being constructed. The urban planner assists with determining an appropriate site within a larger public space where the piece of art will be placed. The entire collaboration system enhances the final product and ensures that the artwork will create a significant and complementary relationship to the architectural and urban environment in which it is located.

Q Projects such as the 369-foot Shiva statue and the Samudra Manthan relief in the new Parliament represent extraordinary engineering achievements. What is the key design, material, and construction challenges involved in translating a sculptural vision into a structure of such monumental scale?

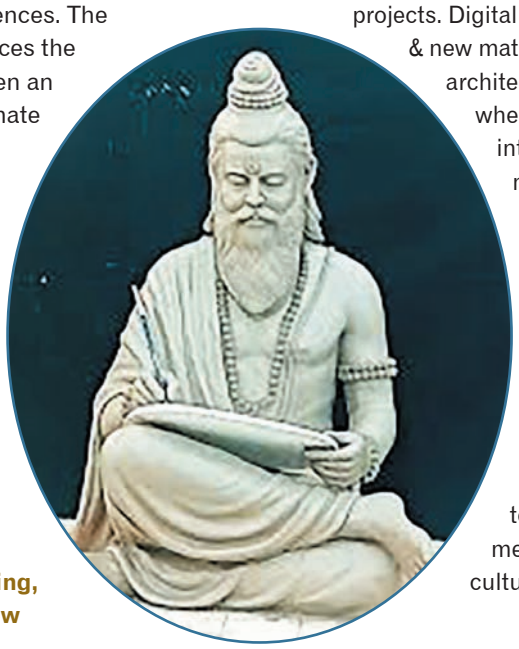
Creating towering statues has tested both creative and technical limits. The challenge amplifies when these sculptures are installed in complex terrains or international locations. We have to manage scale, structural safety, timelines and logistics, all at the same time. This requires precision and resilience. The thing about large-scale public sculptures is that they demand a critical balance between artistic vision and engineering precision. It is inevitable for challenges to arise, especially when ensuring structural stability in different terrains and weather conditions. Transportation and installations, along with a restricted timeline, are some of the other problems which also require careful planning and attention. Each project has its own set of complexities, but ultimately, these challenges end up turning an idea into a monumental reality.

Q As Cities increasingly invest in public art to shape cultural identity and placemaking, what role do you believe monumental sculpture plays in creating meaningful civic spaces and enhancing the architectural narrative of a destination?

Monumental sculptures have an essential function for creating meaningful civic spaces, connecting individuals with their culture, history, and spirit. I feel that sculptures that are cultural or religious are timeless storytellers, which represent who we are, where we came from, and the values that guided our civilisations. Aside from their aesthetic value, these works are also powerful educational resources, preserving previous generations' heritage and providing future generations with inspiration. When they are purposely integrated into public spaces, they add to the architectural story of that destination and help develop an even greater sense of identity and community. Public art, including sculptures and culturally important installations, provides access to these stories for everyone and helps create communities with a greater understanding and appreciation of India's rich culture and value system while creating dynamic cities based on cultural resonance.

Q Your studio has executed projects across more than 40 countries. How do cultural context, local architectural language, climate, and material availability influence the design and execution of large-scale public artworks in different regions?

My background as an artist who has completed projects in over 40 different countries has taught me that public art projects need to be reflective of the local context to be successful; therefore, the project must be developed out of the local context. Cultural heritage, architectural heritage, climate/environmental conditions, and available materials all have a strong influence on how an artwork will be developed and ultimately realised. Our first task will always be to research your area's history and symbols, as well as your community's aspirations, in order to provide a means of connecting with local audiences. The architectural language of a site influences the form, scale, and visual dialogue between an artwork and the surroundings. The climate of a site affects structural, durability, and maintenance issues. Similarly, available materials found locally often provide creative solutions to the artwork and help strengthen the relationship of the project to a place. Working together with all of these characteristics will allow us to develop projects that are culturally significant, technologically sustainable, and offer a lasting connection to the place.



Q With advances in digital modelling, fabrication technologies, and new materials transforming the design industry, how do you see the future relationship between sculpture and architecture evolving over the next decade, particularly in large public and institutional projects?

In the forthcoming decade, the relationship between sculpture & architecture will continue to become closely related, particularly within large public & institutional projects. Digital modelling, fabrication technology, & new material advancements allow artists & architects to work together to create spaces where art, data, and utility are combined into one cohesive result. Sculpture is not only limited to being a standalone piece of art; it has increasingly become integrated into the built environment, positively contributing to the public experience & cultural identity. It is equally important for innovation to remain connected to authenticity & craftsmanship. As India experiences a renaissance of public art, a balance of creativity with the use of contemporary tools is vital through quality education, mentorship, and deeper knowledge of cultural heritage for future creators. ■

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VYNA Electric Highlights the Need for Safer Electrical Infrastructure as Indian Homes Face Rising Summer Power Loads

By **Sumit Kumar,** BU Head and AVP at VYNA Electric

As temperatures rise across India, households are preparing once again for months of higher electricity use. Air conditioners run for longer hours, refrigerators work harder, and everyday devices remain connected for extended periods. While most families focus on cooling appliances during summer, VYNA Electric is highlighting an equally important part of home preparedness: the electrical infrastructure that supports these growing power needs.

Modern Indian homes are using more electricity than ever before. Multiple air conditioners, kitchen appliances, water purifiers, entertainment systems, Wi-Fi routers, workstations, chargers, and lighting systems often operate at the same time. This rise in connected devices has changed how homes consume power, especially during peak summer months.

As household electricity consumption increases, homeowners, builders, architects, and electrical professionals are paying closer attention to the quality of internal electrical systems, including wiring, distribution boards, circuit protection devices, switches, and lighting solutions.

Why Home Electrical Safety Matters More in Summer

During summer, residential power networks often operate under continuous load for several hours.

High outdoor temperatures, increased appliance usage, and voltage fluctuations can place additional pressure on home circuits. If an electrical setup is outdated, overloaded, or poorly protected, it may increase the risk of tripping, overheating, appliance damage, or electrical faults.

A properly planned power distribution system helps distribute electricity more safely across the home. It also protects appliances and reduces the chances of faults affecting multiple circuits. Devices such as Miniature Circuit Breakers (MCBs), Residual Current Circuit Breakers (RCCBs), and surge protection systems play an important role in improving home electrical safety. MCBs help protect circuits from overloads and short circuits, RCCBs help reduce the risk of electric shock caused by current leakage, and surge protection devices help safeguard sensitive appliances from sudden voltage spikes.

Together, these components create

a safer and more stable home electrical environment, especially during periods when air conditioners, refrigerators, water purifiers, and other frequently used appliances operate for longer hours.

The Role of Energy-Efficient Lighting

Lighting is another area where Indian homes are becoming more conscious. Energy-efficient lighting solutions consume less electricity and generate less heat compared to older lighting products. This helps reduce the overall load on the electrical network while improving comfort inside the home.

For families using cooling appliances throughout the day, even small reductions in heat and power consumption can make a meaningful difference. Efficient lighting also supports long-term energy savings and contributes to better residential power management, especially in homes where multiple devices are used together.

Certified Products for Indian Conditions

Electrical products used in Indian homes need to be reliable, certified, and suitable for local operating conditions. Indian households often face varied voltage levels, high seasonal demand, and different wiring conditions across old and new buildings. Because of this, the quality of protection devices, wiring accessories, and lighting products becomes critical.

Choosing certified electrical products helps improve reliability and gives homeowners greater confidence during demanding seasons. For modern homes, safety is not only about adding more appliances. It is also about ensuring that the electrical foundation is strong enough to support changing lifestyles and rising electricity consumption.

A Shift toward Preventive Home Planning

The approach to residential electrical planning is also changing. Instead of treating electrical systems as a final-stage installation, many homeowners and developers are now considering them during the design and construction phase itself. Proper circuit planning, adequate load distribution, quality protection devices, and safe wiring practices are becoming essential parts of future-ready homes.

Interior designers and architects are also working more closely with electrical professionals to ensure that appliance placement, lighting layouts, switch points, and power distribution are planned in a practical and safe manner. This preventive approach helps reduce the need for temporary fixes or unsafe modifications later.

Building Homes for Comfort, Safety, and Long-Term Reliability

Summer comfort depends not only on air conditioners and cooling appliances but also on the strength of the electrical systems that support them. A home with reliable wiring, certified circuit protection, efficient lighting, and proper load planning is better prepared to handle seasonal power demand.

As Indian households continue to adopt more connected devices and high-power appliances, safe electrical infrastructure will remain central to everyday comfort. VYNA Electric believes that investing in dependable electrical systems is no longer just a technical choice. It is a practical step toward safer, more reliable, and future-ready living. ■

With over 17 years across India's electrical and lighting industry, Sumit Kumar combines technical depth with business clarity. Currently as Business Unit Head and Assistant Vice President at VYNA Electric he is driving product innovation, operations and long-term business strategy. The thing that excites him most about his role is the opportunity to build a brand that showcases both technological integrity and human understanding. Sumit Kumar began his professional journey in 2008, in India's fast-growing electrical and lighting industry working with respected names as Surya, Osram, and Orient Electric. Outside of work, Sumit enjoys travelling, shopping and writing.

TRG Bets on Ecosystems, Not Just Structures, for tomorrow's Bharat

TRG is redefining real estate from building structures to building integrated ecosystems. **Pawan Sharma, MD, TRG Group** explains why commercial spaces must deliver community experiences, not just retail square footage in an email interaction with **Tejaswini Paranjape**. TRG aims to shape the 2030 customer: connected, experience-driven, and aspirational. The goal is simple—make life convenient, accessible, and future-ready.

Q TRG positions itself as "Building Tomorrow's Bharat." What is one real estate gap that you believe the industry is still overlooking?

The real estate industry has largely been about building structures; however, there has been a dearth of integrated ecosystems. With urbanization accelerating in India, the time has come for destinations where individuals can not only live, work, and eat but also have fun within a 5L+ catchment area. There is no doubt that one of the biggest voids today is in commercial developments, which create community experiences rather than merely providing spaces for retailers. The future of the real estate sector lies in making life convenient and accessible to people.

Q TRG The Mall sits between Gaur City and Crossing Republik. Beyond location, what is the single biggest differentiator that will drive repeat footfalls?

The location might serve to pull people in at first, but it is the experience that will make them stay engaged. The main differentiation feature offered by TRG The Mall is a full-fledged lifestyle ecosystem being built inside the mall. It has been planned as a destination where people will be able to enjoy themselves for an entire day as opposed to coming here just for shopping. This project incorporates shopping, a food court, a OneMart, a place to exercise, fun areas, and social zones. On top of that, various events and festivals will keep customers returning.Many malls are competing for brands; how is TRG designing a destination that people choose to spend time in, not just shop at?There has been a marked change in consumer expectations, with the emphasis shifting to experiences in addition to transactions. This is more than just a retail proposition, as we aim at creating an entertaining, social, and recreational destination that will become part of their everyday life. We plan to create a food court offering products from premium brands as the key draw card, while we also plan to create zones that will allow customers to come together for events and festivities. We

intend to create a pleasant and stimulating environment where consumers can stay for longer periods.

Q As TRG evolves from a developer into a brand, what legacy do you want the company to be known for a decade from now?

In ten years from now, we want to establish TRG as a firm that offers its stakeholders consistent values in terms of trustworthiness, value-for-money, and future-proof developments. We aim at developing world-class landmarks that will not only change the economy of our stakeholders for the better but will ensure that we maintain high levels of quality in all of our developments. At the same time, we would like to ensure that we develop assets that will keep delivering opportunities to investors, enterprises, and other stakeholders in the long run. Most of all, we would like to contribute to India's urbanization story.After the ₹400-crore TRG The Mall, what will define the next phase of growth for TRG—scale, geography, or asset diversification?Our strategy for the next phase of growth at TRG will entail a perfect blend of scale, geography, and diversification. In essence, our goal will involve developing bigger and more transformative projects while simultaneously expanding into new geographic locations that hold potential for the future. This notwithstanding, there is a myriad of future growth corridors that exist within other property types such as commercial, retail, mixed-use, hospitality, and experience properties. As such, one of our core strategies involves the identification of such growth corridors even before they become mainstream. In doing so, we will ensure that we are future-ready.

Q If you had to describe the TRG customer of 2030 in three words, what would those words be—and how are your projects evolving to serve that customer?

The Customer of the Year 2030 at TRG can be characterized in four words: Connected, Experience-Driven, 4C advantage-Convenience, Connectivity, Customer base & Capital growth and Aspirational. Future customers will require convenience, technology, and experience to go hand in hand in a destination that they visit. They will value their time more than before and prefer destinations that offer them everything under one roof, including places for them to shop, dine, have fun, relax, and interact socially. The development of our projects is focused on creating an environment that offers them smart accessibility, experiential retail, and an overall integrated living experience. Technology, convenience, and sustainability continue to form the crux of our plans. ■

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Alumil India Advanced Façade Systems

Alumil India offers advanced aluminium façade systems for high-rise residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments. The unitized curtain wall systems feature slender 140 mm depth mullions for refined aesthetics without compromising structural strength. Systems integrate dual sash outward opening side hung windows designed for fire safety compliance. Key performance features include high-quality glazing for maximum daylight penetration, EPDM gaskets, and a triple barrier sealing system ensuring watertightness, airtightness, acoustic insulation, and high wind-load resistance. Suitable for coastal and urban environments, the systems reduce artificial lighting needs and enhance occupant comfort. Engineered for precision, they support contemporary, sustainable, and human-centric architecture.

Antica Ceramica Green Tile Collection

Antica Ceramica's Green Tile Collection comprises a nature-inspired range of wall and floor tiles for residential and commercial spaces. The collection features emerald, olive, alpine, and botanical shades with artisanal textures, marble effects, fluted surfaces, subway patterns, and hexagonal mosaics. Designs include Alpine Green Marble, Green Fluted Tiles, and Glossy Green Subway Tiles for feature walls, wainscoting, vanities, and flooring. Durable and easy to maintain, the tiles suit bathrooms, spas, hotels, restaurants, and luxury homes. They pair with natural stone, wood, brass, and contemporary fixtures. Available across India at Antica Ceramica showrooms and authorised dealers.

AIDO SLYNK Door System

AIDO, an endorsed brand of dormakaba, launches SLYNK, a premium profiled door system for flexible, multifunctional spaces. Designed for open-plan layouts and minimalist aesthetics, it optimizes space and enables seamless movement in residential and commercial interiors. The range offers seven configurations: Invisible Sliding, Pocket Sliding, Moving Sliding, Telescopic Sliding, Synchro Sliding, Single Leaf Sliding, and Swing Door Systems. Compatible with wooden, framed glass, and frameless glass doors, SLYNK features slim profiles and concealed hardware for clean lines. Finishes include Black Matte, Brush Gold, and Brush Champagne. Engineered for smooth operation and durability, it supports dynamic spatial needs without visual disruption.

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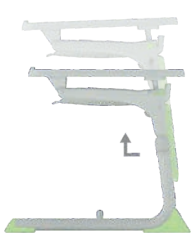

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