

Future-ready homes

GREEN ARCHITECTURE, TODAY, IS NO MORE AN OPTION, BUT A RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL. EXPERTS SHED MORE LIGHT

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Exponentially growing urban population has led to a tremendous strain on available land and amenities in most metropolitan cities. With advanced technology and innovative design, designers have begun to achieve sustainable and smart integration in design at the individual building level. However, integrating these advanced design strategies within the urban development level has been slow.

"The expansion of cities that urban population growth entails cannot be contained merely by a horizontal expansion of cities; instead, it must make adequate room to accommodate it in more innovative, more inclusive, and sustainable models. In this context, the redevelopment of under-utilised central urban areas is a step in that direction, which needs to be seen with a fresher perspective as a model for urban development. This momentous task involves extensive sustainable planning for developing housing, open spaces, and supporting infrastructure. The goal is to transform low-density areas into high-density mixed-use developments with adequate infrastructure to cater to the new inhabitants," says, Mitu Mathur, director, GPM Architects and Planners.

According to Mathur, adopting the

principle of new urbanism that aligns with the existing infrastructure and development policies is a vital principle that helps check the issue of urban sprawling. Hence, the application of 'smart growth' or 'mixed growth' should be encouraged.

TOGETHER FOR A GREENER PLANET

According to a report by the United Nations, 68 per cent of the world's population is projected to live in urban areas by 2050. India will have added 416 million urban dwellers,

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combined with the overall growth of the world's population, which could add another 2.5 billion people to urban areas by 2050.

Vishal Sharma, founder partner and principal architect, Confluence Consultants, shares, "As responsible architects and custodians of the built environment, it is essential to address the need for sustainable infrastructure solutions to combat the global crisis. A fundamental shift is necessary in how we approach urban development to address the growth of urban populations and to preserve our environment. With the rise of solar energy technologies and highly efficient material innovations, the need for renewable energy generation will increase. Understanding the key innovation technologies and modern trends in urbanisation likely to unfold over the coming years is crucial to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including efforts to forge a new framework of urban development. One such government-led initiative is net-positive architecture."

As the world continues to urbanise, sustainable development will hugely depend on successful urban growth management, especially in low-income and lower-middle-income countries where the pace of urbanisation is projected to be the fastest. "Embracing a net-positive strategy in housing development with the use of innovative technologies and BIM, future developments can majorly benefit Indian infrastructure growth. Although current regulations around sustainable design are limited, implementing targeted regulations aimed at net-zero and net-positive infrastructure while strengthening the linkages between the existing economic, social, and environmental ties will foster a trajectory of an environmentally responsible future in India," adds Sharma.

A CONSCIOUS APPROACH

The infrastructure sector is one of the key drivers of the Indian economy and overall national development and growth today. This has led to an increased focus on perfecting and revolutionising the



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ARCHITECTURE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO TELL STORIES, GIVE A NEW VOICE TO OUR ASPIRATIONS, AND BE A VEHICLE OF CHANGE TO ADDRESS OUR CHALLENGES

architectural landscape in India. "As infrastructure projects grow in scale and numbers, the technicalities associated with sustainability and green design assume multiple layers. Building construction and operations can have extensive direct and indirect impacts on the environment, society, and the economy. In response to these challenges, the use of innovative technology has helped introduce greener interventions within large infrastructure projects," says Sneha Gurjar, director, CEM Engineers.

On parallel lines, Aman Aggarwal, principal architect, Charged Voids, shares, "The world's most recent developments have made it abundantly clear that the in-between areas — the intermediary spaces and outdoor pockets — are more crucial to architectural design than previously thought. These areas can manifest as interactive zones in public buildings, play areas in schools, and courtyards in all types of buildings. The buffer zones and liminal spaces are just as important as the built form, ensuring that nature remains an intrinsic part of our lives. Buildings must also incorporate sustainable building techniques and micro-environments

that are not controlled by mechanical air conditioning. It must be a thriving environment with plenty of greens and should be thermally comfortable. For this, indoor areas should ideally open up to courtyards or terraces from multiple directions."

Architecture has the potential to tell stories, create and give a new voice to our aspirations, and be a vehicle of change to address our needs and challenges. It often reflects our attitude toward how we live on this planet. Architecture is the art and science of buildings, but these buildings are footprints — footprints that outlive us.

"Predominantly, global architectural practices have gravitated towards homogenising ideologies and construction methods over the past few decades, and this has informed how buildings have been built and even how architecture has been taught in our country. We stand at a critical crossroads today where many architects and designers in the country over the last few years have been re-evaluating the practice of architecture and interior design and returning to the roots," says Ankur

Choksi, founding principal, Studio Lotus.

THE FUTURE IS NET-ZERO

While there is no clear definition in any rulebook for this relatively new concept in Indian infrastructure — 'net-zero building' represents

the equilibrium between a building's energy requirements and the renewable energy generated to meet that demand.

The key to achieving net-zero energy lies in utilising renewable energy sources where the building recycles and replenishes resources in equal amounts to its consumption. With minimal impact on the site, a net-zero energy approach emphasises on reducing the building's load or demand while also facilitating micro-generation.

"Achieving widespread adoption of net-zero buildings demands a well-defined roadmap, particularly focusing on affordability and skill development. With cut-throat competition in the real-estate business and the constant pressure to create value in their offerings, developers across the country are making an effort to join the bandwagon on sustainability. Residences offer ample possibilities for achieving sustainability. Notably, enhancing facade R-Values proves effective in energy savings, particularly in tropical zones and densely populated cities," says on a concluding note Ravi Sarangan, co-founder and director, Edifice Consultants.



PAVING WAY TO WELLNESS

WHETHER IT'S VITAMINS, MINERALS, HERBAL EXTRACTS, OR SPECIALISED DIETARY AIDS, THE INCREASING INTAKE OF HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS SIGNIFIES A COLLECTIVE AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLISTIC HEALTH

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Our immunity highly depends on the kind of diet that we follow. The immune system is best prepared to take action against viruses when we choose foods that provide a steady stream of key nutrients.

Nutritional supplements enhance our regular diet to ensure a healthy supply of nutrients. They contain vitamins and minerals that help you feel better, look better, and even sleep better. It's important to note that while health supplements can be beneficial, they should not replace a balanced diet. A well-rounded, nutrient-dense diet remains the primary source of essential nutrients.

However, before starting any supplement regimen, it is advisable to consult with a healthcare provider or a registered dietitian to ensure that your choices are appropriate for your individual health needs and goals. Additionally, it's crucial to choose high-quality supplements from reputable manufacturers to ensure their safety and efficacy.

"Our soils are severely depleted of minerals and other nutrients. Some reports in the US estimate the nutrient density of our current topsoil to be just 10-20 per cent of what it was a hundred years ago. So, the situation is such that even if you do eat a super healthy diet of supposedly nutrient-dense natural whole foods (which is a rarity), you are still likely to be short on nutrients to some extent. The more stress that our body undergoes — not just in the form of emotional stress but other modern physical stressors like toxin exposure, pollution, and blue light exposure — the more nutrients it depletes, thus further increasing nutrient needs," says Suyash Bhandari, functional nutritionist and chief of iThrive Essentials - Supplements Vertical, iThrive.

According to Bhandari, people have poor gut health which hinders the absorption of nutrients. Other health conditions also necessitate much higher intakes of nutrients — this is known as a therapeutic dose vs. the standard dose which is the normal requirement. "All of the above is what makes nutritional supplements a critical health requirement today. However, people

should consult with a functional medicine practitioner to get regular health assessments done and take whatever supplements may be required to address their deficiencies and health imbalances," adds Bhandari.

Health supplements can play a significant role in supporting overall well-being and addressing specific health needs. While it's essential to obtain most of your essential nutrients from a balanced diet, there are several reasons why health supplements are considered important. Here are a few outlined by Himmath Jain, co-founder, AS-IT-IS Nutrition:



Health supplements can play a significant role in supporting overall well-being and addressing specific health needs

- The adoption of unhealthy eating habits (eating processed food, smoking), a lack of fibre and amino acids, and a decline in the consumption of fruits and vegetables have all contributed to nutrient deficiencies. The additional nutrients provided by dietary supplements help meet recommended dietary nutrient intake.
- Dietary supplements are an active method of avoiding diseases linked to poor diet. Supplements act as substitute items for health benefits and counter the aspect of decreased drug reimbursements and rising healthcare costs.
- Supplements provide a convenient way to ensure nutrient intake when individuals can't completely rely on

food sources or increase the quality of their diet, especially for busy people and those who adhere to dietary restrictions like veganism and vegetarianism.

- Dietary supplements are made to be more individualised for each person's needs (based on age, sex, and goals), including those related to fitness, sports, GI issues, obesity, skincare, haircare, cognitive support, heart health, detoxification, immunological support, sleep benefits, and others.

- There is growing popularity of attaining a muscular physique in the age group between 20 and 40. Usage of supplements like protein powder, BCAA, Creatine, or other pre/post-workouts as part of a comprehensive training program will help to meet the muscle-building goals faster.

- Some companies use misleading advertising and make unsubstantiated claims about the advantages of supplements. Be wary of such assertions. Select a renowned brand that adheres to GMP standards and uses third-party lab testing to guarantee quality and potency. Always seek the advice of a healthcare professional for personalised advice before embarking on supplementation.

- It is crucial to adhere to the suggested dosage listed on the product label.
- Excessive consumption might have negative effects. If you are already on medication, consider the potential interactions of supplements with medication.

- The rise in consumption of supplements has led to an increase in the influx of counterfeit and fake supplements into the market. Beware of non-authorised products.
- Store supplements properly in order to maintain the integrity and potency of the supplement.

- The supplements you choose should support your objectives. The supplement that one may be taking might not be what others need.
- Supplements should not replace or act as a substitute for a healthy diet; rather, they should work in conjunction with it.

Let your floor do the talking

MANY LUXURY HOMES ARE EMBEDDED WITH LATEST AND EXQUISITE FLOORINGS. FLOORS CAN RIGHTLY BE DUBBED AS THE MIRROR OF YOUR INTERIOR DÉCOR

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Once just a humble ground, flooring today is increasingly the trendsetter in modern homes. From setting the mood to highlighting the expanse, flooring is being used to define the aesthetics of homes. And while stone continues to be the favorite flooring option for luxury homes, tiles are fast catching up and are moving out from the kitchens and bathrooms into the main home areas. Many luxury homes are embedded with latest and plush floorings. Floors to a considerable extent measure the quotient of your interior décor. They showcase the overall luxury element of the building. Once you enter a luxury home, the very first thing that might leave you floored and thrilled as well is the tiles, and flooring of the home to be precise. Like everything in life, tile designs are also evolving with time. Choosing the right color tile for your living spaces is important to ensure that it not only matches the soft furnishings but also creates a suitable backdrop for decorating the rest of the room.

Alok Agarwal, chief marketing officer, Orient Bell Limited, says, "From a consumer perspective, based on the surface of application there are four types of tiles - roof tiles, wall tiles, flooring tiles and paver tiles. In turn, wall & floor tiles could



be of four types themselves: Ceramic, Glazed Vitrified tiles, Polished Vitrified Tiles and Double charge. Glazed Vitrified Tiles (GVT) are emerging as new segments owing to sheer variety of designs the glaze finish can deliver. Double charge's long lastingness retains its appeal with the commercial spaces and ceramic retains its timeless appeal and popularity."

Role of tiles/flooring in the overall interiors? Typically, urban consumers buy a home or make their own home on a plot of land. In most cases this is a once-in-a-lifetime event. Tiles make the home look clean & hygienic. They are easy to clean and require low maintenance. Today, tiles can also

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add to aesthetic appeal.

There is the high net worth environmentally conscious consumer who desires a wood-like appearance in his bedroom or study room. For them we have tiles that have the texture & appearance of wooden planks. As summer sets in, heat waves are common. Given the need to conserve electricity, our Cool Tiles enable interiors to be at 4-6 degrees lower by reflecting most of the solar heat. These tiles are used on rooftops and have proven themselves even in harsh conditions like military establishments in deserts. In high traffic areas, forever tiles, with a very high resistance to scratch are used.

In the last five years, Key metros have seen a decline in the size of homes being put on the market to make them affordable for the younger buyer. While homes may be smaller, by choosing

Tiles of the right color or laying them in appropriate patterns it's possible to make them even the smallest rooms look bigger.

Talking about different types of tiles are being used for a luxury home's flooring, Aditya Gupta, CEO, Orient Bell Limited, says, "Luxury home flooring is one of the most important components in a house which should not be ignored. Larger size of tiles in Super Gloss 800x1200mm, 600x1200mm and 800x800mm in marble look can be used in the living room to make the joints less visible. This makes the overall look better. For bedrooms wooden planks in bigger sizes can be used as they are water resistant and made such that looks like natural wood. Similarly, there are various options available for kitchens and bathrooms as well."

Ashok Basoya, founder, Ottimo, says, "Driving this trend is the versatility of tiles and the desire of luxury home owners to create a unique ambience reflective of their personalities. Responding to this desire, tile makers have successfully mimicked many natural materials to create tiles that are durable, eco-friendly and look like wood, marble, etc."

