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The Eternal Question

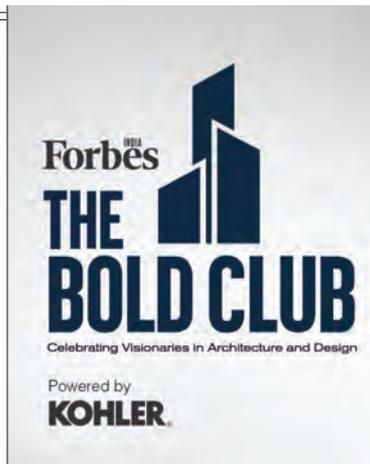What is **Deepinder Goyal's** game plan to live up to Zomato's new name?

PLUS

Quick Commerce: Convenience at a cost

BigBasket: Why Hari Menon believes it is impossible to make too much money in QComm

Redefining Aesthetics

Celebrating architects and interior designers who have pushed boundaries by utilising technology and AI, and set new standards in the industry

Since its inception, The Bold Club, an initiative by Kohler and *Forbes India*, has championed excellence in architecture and design, bringing to light the stories of India's most distinguished creative minds. Over the past three seasons, the series has celebrated architects and interior designers who have pushed boundaries and set new standards in the industry. Season 4 takes this journey forward with 'Celebrating Visionaries in Architecture and Design' as its theme, spotlighting trailblazers whose innovative use of technology and groundbreaking ideas continue to shape the architectural narrative.

It is a celebration of brilliance shaping the landscape of modern design. The project aims to spotlight firms and individuals at the forefront of innovation and design. The theme celebrates those who dare to dream and build beyond the ordinary. These architects leverage technology, embrace sustainability, and innovate with purpose, creating designs that stand as landmarks of human ingenuity. In an era defined by rapid urbanisation, climate urgency, and digital transformation, their work offers solutions and inspiration for addressing some of the most pressing challenges of our times.

This exclusive print and video series celebrates the legends who have redefined aesthetics and those who have utilised technology and AI to revolutionise the design process. From innovative spaces to timeless designs, these luminaries embody the synergy of artistry and vision. Through in-depth interviews and immersive showcases, we delve into their creative philosophies, groundbreaking projects, and future-focussed approaches. Targeted towards India's design leaders, this series honours those shaping the built environment while setting benchmarks for a tech-integrated future in architecture and interior design.

Join us in exploring the stories and legacies of India's finest minds crafting the future of built environments.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Aligned with the theme 'Celebrating Visionaries in Architecture and Design' for Season 4 of The Bold Club, a comprehensive multi-point evaluation system was adopted. Over 50 leading architecture and design firms of India were assessed on a scale of 1 to 5, considering key parameters such as innovation and technology, unique selling proposition, sustainability and ESG, industry recognition through awards, and educational backgrounds. Based on this rigorous evaluation, the eventual selection of 30 firms that best represented the theme was finalised.

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Celebrating Visionaries in Architecture and Design
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Blending Innovation with Sustainability

Anil Badan is a reputable name in the hospitality design industry. Established in 2003, his firm, Studio B Architects, has built a reputation for interior design of premium destination hotels and resorts in Asia and Africa.

Hailing from a small town in Jammu, Badan cultivated a deep passion for design and its expressions from a young age. This passion inspired him to embark on an ambitious journey to study architecture in Kerala. Traveling across India to achieve his dream was challenging, especially with language barriers. Badan's professional journey began humbly with modest earnings from his job, which prompted him to pursue freelance projects, carefully selecting opportunities that aligned with his long-term vision of making an impact in the industry. After five years, he turned his vision into reality by founding Studio B Architects.

Badan's creative process revolves around creating a balance between functional and tech-infused spaces. He strives to design spaces with a clutter-free appearance, incorporating built-in gadgets and hidden design elements to craft a minimalist aesthetic. The key to achieving design goals is to ensure a smooth integration of technology with creative design by working together with designers and tech specialists.

One project that exemplifies his vision is the Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa in Gulmarg. Built in the Kashmiri style, the design glorifies modern architecture with vernacular touches, incorporating local Basholi art, and traditional Kashmiri furniture. The cosy and

Anil Badan
Architect
Studio B Architects

artistic ambience includes automated heated floors, expansive windows, warm headboards and vibrant Irish carpets, which demonstrate how subtle, functional spaces can celebrate cultural heritage while offering luxury and innovation.

"The future of architecture lies in blending innovation with sustainability, where technology meets human-centric design," says Badan. "Technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are transforming architecture." He strongly feels that the integration of AI, computational design, and renewable materials will redefine how to design, build and inhabit the environment. AI and IoT devices will personalise spaces, AR and VR technologies will provide immersive experiences in addition to real-time location data and other necessary information, says the consummate craftsman.

Badan's advice to young architects is to embrace curiosity and continuous learning, explore diverse disciplines, and balance creativity with practicality, to shape not only spaces but the lives of their inhabitants. **F**

● **KAMAYNI**

SUDHIR CHANDRA

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Harmonising Functionality with Creativity

A visionary with a sharp eye for detail and winner of numerous accolades, Arun Sharma believes in aligning designs with nature. Established in 1997 as an architecture and interior design firm, Atrey & Associates has a versatile body of work, ranging from luxurious residences, offices and retail to hospitality under the dynamic leadership of Sharma.

Born to an architect father, Sharma often accompanied him to project sites which instilled in him a fascination with design and the transformative power of architecture. As he recalls, "Watching spaces take shape and come to life left a lasting impression on me." This early exposure ignited a lifelong passion for blending art, science and creativity to craft enduring soulful spaces.

Sharma's design approach allows all technical and non-technical aspects of design to come together and deliver brilliant results. At the core of his creative process lies a commitment to harmonising functionality with innovation to design technology-driven sustainable spaces. The design process starts with a deep understanding of the space's purpose and essence, ensuring that it serves the intended function seamlessly. Drawing inspiration from nature and materials, Sharma ensures that his team uses sun-path-oriented planning to create sustainable and indigenous designs.

One project that epitomises this vision is the La Solitaire Jewellery Store, whose design draws inspiration from the raw beauty of gold and diamond mines

Arun Sharma
Principal architect
Atrey & Associates

with uneven, rustic surfaces that resemble the natural rock formations found deep within the Earth. This concept highlights the transformation of raw materials into exquisite pieces, blending rough textures with the brilliance of jewellery, while telling the story of craftsmanship and nature's beauty.

Sharma endorses the transformative role of AI in revolutionising architecture by enhancing efficiency, precision and creativity. He believes that the integration of AI and architecture can streamline design processes, analyse vast datasets for better decision-making, and predict future trends in sustainability and functionality. However, he envisages AI as a collaborator rather than a replacement in shaping the future of architecture. He affirms, "The soul of a design—its emotional and cultural essence—will always come from the human touch."

Sharma foresees architecture as a fusion of sustainability, innovation and cultural relevance where designs will focus on harmony with nature, integrating technology to enhance functionality while preserving the human touch. His advice is to stay curious, understand people's needs, and make purposeful designs while embracing technology, using emotional and cultural essence in creating meaningful spaces. **F**

SUDHIR CHANDRA

● **KAMAYNI**

Gurpreet S Shah has more than two decades of experience in local and international architecture and urban design. With multiple awards under his belt, Shah has pioneered sustainable infrastructure designs in India.

Deeply inspired by architecture's ability to combine art, functionality and sustainability, Shah says, "Architecture has always been a powerful medium to shape communities." Son of Charanjit Singh Shah, founder of Creative Group, his early exposure to design and urban spaces fuelled Shah's passion for creating environments that improve lives and elevate experiences. After completing his master's of science in Urban Design from Columbia University, he returned to India to work on large-scale mega infrastructure projects, driven by a dream of elevating the nation's infrastructure to new heights and contributing to its growth and progress.

Shah's creative process is driven by the fusion of innovation and purpose. Every design starts with understanding the user's needs, balanced with sustainability, functionality and technological advancements. He believes in creating visually compelling designs that leave a positive environmental and social impact.

The modernisation of Chennai's airport exemplifies Shah's design philosophy, blending functionality and sustainability to create a green, efficient and user-friendly transportation hub with features like energy-efficient lighting, water recycling, and natural ventilation. Another milestone project is the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor, completed in a record four months,

A Fusion Of Tech & Purpose

Gurpreet S Shah

Principal architect & urban designer
Creative Group

whose design symbolises unity and operational excellence contributing to a broader socio-political narrative. Similarly, the expansion of Gwalior airport seamlessly integrates tradition and innovation by incorporating sustainable features like a solar plant, rainwater harvesting and sewage recycling. By celebrating Madhya Pradesh's heritage, the project aligns with Smart City goals, boosts tourism, employment and regional identity, setting a benchmark for functional, sustainable design.

Shah affirms the role of AI in revolutionising architecture. AI has the potential to handle data-driven decisions and streamline processes like site analysis, material optimisation, and energy and predictive modelling, allowing architects to focus on creativity and human-centric designs. Shah envisions the future of architecture in creating resilient, adaptive and sustainable spaces that respond to environmental challenges and technological advancements. His advice to young architects is: "Embrace innovation, prioritise sustainability, and never lose sight of the human element in design. Your work should inspire and endure, shaping a better tomorrow." **F**
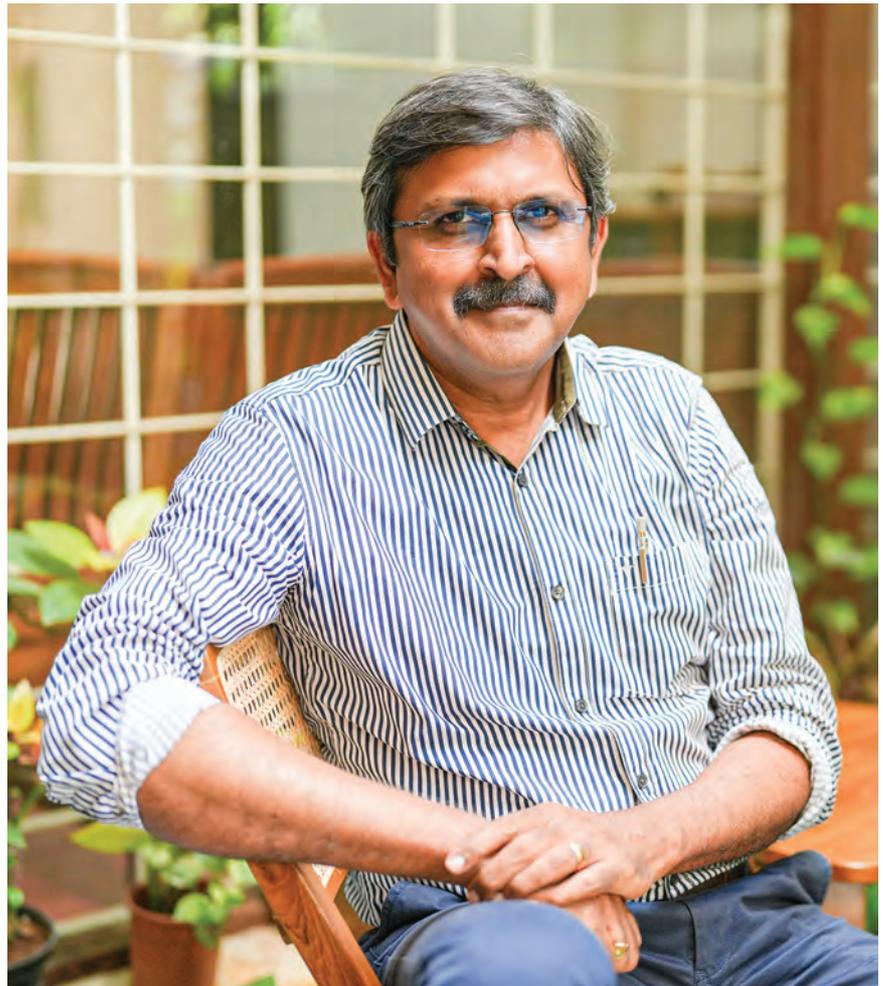
● KAMAYNI

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SUDHIR CHANDRA

Integrating Landscapes with Architectural Design

Cheralathan Associates, the architectural firm behind Chennai's first multiplex Mayajaal, was established in 2001 by Cheralathan Kulothungan and a team of architects with ample experience. Since its inception, the firm has handled over 700 projects in India and abroad, synthesising all aspects of architecture, interior design and landscape design.

A gold medallist twice over and a landscape architect, Cheralathan integrates landscape details cohesively with architectural design to optimise the environment. For him, architecture is a harmonious blend of art and technology, creating innovative designs that enhance the quality of life for its inhabitants. The joy of seeing his vision being utilised by the end users is a reward that motivates Cheralathan to push boundaries and explore more to provide unique solutions.

Cheralathan asserts that the creative process in architecture involves converting art into reality by creating built environments using technology. From conceptualisation to material selection and operating efficiency, technological advancements inspire and motivate innovation to enhance the quality of the design process. He believes that AI can play a transformative role in architecture. AI is a powerful tool that can help architects visualise designs across multiple dimensions, enabling a human-centric approach for better communication and more refined solutions.

For Cheralathan, the creation of mixed-use developments is a challenge as it demands a multi-dimensional approach,

Cheralathan Kulothungan

Principal architect
Cheralathan Associates

where architects must find creative solutions to balance diverse needs and functional requirements. The dynamic nature of such projects requires unique, imaginative and creative solutions to intricate problems.

In Cheralathan's view, the current generation of architects has greater responsibility and opportunity to create sustainable architecture. They must consider broader perspectives, from environmental stability to technological integration. Rapidly increasing demands for new building forms with versatile applications call for continuous innovation and evolution in design practices. Architects must embrace change, think holistically, and innovate continuously. Ⓕ

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Pushing Creative Boundaries

Khozema Chitalwala, a luminary in the hospitality design realm, boasts a distinguished career spanning more than three decades. He founded Designers Group, an award-winning experiential design studio in 1989. Believing in simple-yet groundbreaking design, this global hospitality firm outlines concepts that prove to be smart, user-interactive, and stand up to the specifications of the global market.

For someone who never intended to become an architect, Chitalwala's journey has been serendipitous yet profoundly impactful. With his brother pursuing engineering, he initially wanted to become a doctor. A chance encounter with some architect friends led him to the Rachna Prasad Academy of Architecture. The beautiful and serene campus with lush greenery and the iconic banyan tree served as an impetus for him to pursue architecture.

Chitalwala's creative process is rooted in a logical and thoughtful approach to functionality, designing spaces that are intuitive, efficient and user centric. He is a great endorser of leveraging cutting-edge technologies, including AI and advanced design software, to help push the boundaries of both creativity and engineering. He believes AI is beneficial for architects to enhance their abilities, improve creative output and thought process. AI can analyse data, optimise layouts, and envision solutions that may not be immediately apparent through traditional methods. This blending of technical precision with creative innovation helps them craft spaces that exceed expectations.

Chitalwala says, "Our goal is to create spaces that are not

Khozema Chitalwala
Principal architect
Designers Group

only visually striking but also technologically advanced, adaptable, and inherently functional—perfectly attuned to the evolving needs of modern living."

One standout project that is a powerful embodiment of their vision is the Taj Devi Ratn Hotel in Jaipur, a testament to their philosophy of blending tradition with innovation, of transforming a space into an experience that celebrates creativity, culture and functionality. Situated in the heart of Jaipur, this hotel honours the region's rich heritage while incorporating contemporary designs that resonate with modern sensibilities. This hotel showcases their deep respect for local craftsmanship, sustainable design, and a commitment for creating impressive spaces.

As India is experiencing rapid development, the architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) industry has a substantial contribution to the GDP, creating immense opportunities for architects and designers.

Chitalwala is proud to say that architects have a significant role in shaping India's urban and rural landscapes. To meet the growing demands of the industry and sustain the quality of services, both architecture and interior design must be fully professionalised, with a commitment to delivering sustainable, innovative, and world-class solutions embracing a systematic and service-oriented approach. He advises young architects to stay adaptable and open to learning, to stay persistent, curious and always work towards the goal of creating designs that stand as a testament to their passion and ingenuity.

● **KAMAYNI**

Balancing Imagination with Logic

A trained architect from Mumbai and New York, Rupande Shah started her design firm, Rupande Shah & Associates in 1995 in Kolkata. Though she consciously stays away from participating in competitions, she has been felicitated and awarded for her work numerous times. The firm has a diverse repository of projects in housing and retail spaces.

An avid reader, Shah was inspired to pursue architecture after reading *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand while in class 12. That combined with the excitement of creating spaces where life unfolds were motivations that fuelled her journey in architecture. "I am grateful for every step I've taken in this profession," she says.

Shah believes that "architecture and design is a brilliant combination of art and science". Her creative process is a balance between the imaginative right brain and logical left brain, where she emphasises and works with both, creating designs that ensure functionality.

Shah says that technology like AI, when used judiciously, enhances user experiences and elevates spaces to new heights. AI can serve as a valuable tool to assist architects in visualising projects and solving problems, but should not substitute creativity and it cannot replace the core principles of usability and flexibility. The essence of architecture lies in innovation and creative thinking, usability, and flexibility to create efficient and functional spaces. Shah states that while technology can enhance our abilities, it should not overshadow the creative process.

Over three decades, Shah has worked on various projects, designing solutions that align with the clients'

Rupande Shah
Founder & principal designer
Rupande Shah & Associates

unique requirements, with each project having its own distinct story. Shah's approach centres on creating 'biophilic designs', integrating natural materials, light and ventilation. Her design language combines clean, straight lines, open spaces, and a strong connection between the indoors and outdoors.

Shah believes that with the world rapidly progressing, especially urbanisation in India, there is a growing demand for creative, thoughtful, and sensitive architecture. Contextual planning and the use of eco-friendly materials with focus on sustainable architecture are vital for creating good designs. She advises young designers to approach design thoughtfully, with sensitivity and a focus on sustainability. The future of architecture is as dynamic as it is inspiring, filled with endless possibilities for those willing to dream and innovate.

● KAMAYNI

Optimising Space & Elevating Utility

Shekar Ganti has over 20 years of experience in master planning, architecture, and construction. An alumnus of Sir JJ School of Art & University of South California, Ganti worked in the US for a decade before starting his firm with offices in the US and India. For nearly a decade, the firm has been designing built environments, master planning, hospitality, space planning, and architectural lighting for clients in the US, Africa and India.

Growing up in a family that thrived on art and creativity shaped Ganti's journey in the field of architecture. His late father, a fine arts professor at Sir JJ School of Art, coupled with his brother's interest in commercial arts instilled in him a love and appreciation for art, literature and creativity. Given this environment, architecture was a natural and harmonious extension of his surroundings and personal aspirations.

Ganti is an exponent of human-centric designs, seamlessly converging technology and functionality. He strives to create ergonomic, adaptable spaces catering to modern lifestyles while exuding elegance. Whether employing modular, multifunctional elements in office spaces or modular furniture and smart home integration in residential spaces, he believes in providing intelligent solutions optimising space, and elevating utility to address clients' needs.

One project that epitomises Ganti's vision is a township in Pune's Wagholi; it is a 150-acre development comprising both villas and high-rise buildings, with a dynamic, self-sustaining neighbourhood that has all the amenities residents need. The

Shekar Ganti
Partner
GA Design Consultants (India),
Ganti & Associates (US)

township demonstrates the power of thoughtful planning in creating spaces that are not just beautiful but impactful, enriching lives and fostering a sense of belonging.

Ganti envisages AI as a valuable tool for enhancing creativity and efficiency and transforming designing, building, and managing spaces. Cutting-edge tools such as generative AI, virtual reality, and augmented reality allow for real-time simulations, enabling design refinements with unparalleled accuracy. AI can be used to generate parametric designs that adapt to environmental conditions, predict material longevity, and simulate urban growth patterns. By integrating AI into his workflow, he not only streamlines processes but also ensures his designs address broader societal challenges, such as housing shortages and climate resilience to create resilient and sustainable structures tailored to the needs of communities.

For Ganti, the future of architecture lies in sustainability, innovation and human well-being. Architects must pioneer eco-conscious designs that leverage AI, new materials, and adaptive technologies. His advice to young architects is: "Embrace sustainability as a cornerstone of your practice, master the tools of innovation, and design with empathy and purpose."

● **KAMAYNI**

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A legendary architect, Venkat Aiyadurai is based in Chennai. Under his leadership, the firm has designed and delivered close to 120 million sq ft of residential, commercial, educational, institutional and information technology buildings since its inception in 1984.

Initially an engineering aspirant, Aiyadurai ended up studying architecture. But once enrolled, he excelled in this field combining education with hands-on experience. Working part time with his studies, he gained valuable insights and practical knowledge working with leading architects and firms in Chennai. The highlight of his early career was working alongside Geoffrey Bawa in Sri Lanka, whose vision greatly influenced his approach to design.

Aiyadurai's approach to architecture is guided by three principles: Simplicity, functionality and perfect proportions. When designing spaces, the priority is to ensure natural ventilation, well-optimised layouts, and integration of courtyards to create harmonious environments. This balance of form and function ensures spaces are both aesthetically pleasing and efficient.

One of Aiyadurai's notable projects include the Chepauk Cricket Stadium in Chennai, designed in collaboration with Hopkins Associates UK. The stadium's innovative design incorporates gaps between the stands to facilitate cross ventilation, enhancing players' comfort and demonstrating a commitment to functional and sustainable architecture.

Aiyadurai emphasises the use of technology, including AI in enhancing the design process by optimising energy use, reducing carbon footprints, and utilising sustainable materials. AI is reshaping the way architects conceptualise and construct buildings by enabling 3D modelling, generative design, resource optimisation, site analysis, virtual reality visualisation, intelligent building systems, construction monitoring, data-driven design decisions, and autonomous robots in construction.

Aiyadurai has been a mentor for many young architects. He advises them to focus on simplicity, continuous learning and gaining practical experience. He emphasises the importance of working in reputable firms, learning basics of architecture, spending time on construction sites and mastering modern software before venturing out independently. However, amidst the technological advancements, he urges young designers not to lose sight of the timeless art of sketching, which remains a vital skill in conceptualising and communicating ideas.

● KAMAYNI

Simplicity, Functionality and Proportions

Venkat Aiyadurai
Proprietor
Nataraj & Venkat Architects

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With a career nearing three decades, multiple award and citation winner Vistasp Bhagwagar is a pioneer in architectural planning and urban design. A formidable mentor and guide to young architects, he founded AVA Design Studio in 1996. Under his leadership, the studio has grown into a nationally recognised architectural and interior design firm known for its commitment to creating sustainable and iconic architecture.

Inspired by a love for art and cartooning since his childhood, Bhagwagar ventured into architecture fulfilling his father's ambition embracing the field with imagination and determination. A creative person, his adeptness in drawing and visualisation led him to start a side-business creating perspective views, earning both experience and pocket money during his college days.

For Bhagwagar, the most creative part of architectural design is the human interface of space and context. "Spaces are meant to be used by humans, not robots", he emphasises. His creative process involves an amalgamation of functionality and technology such that technology amplifies the space's human and experiential quality. While designing offices and technical workspaces, he envisages them to the aspirations and identity of their users. This interplay between humanity and technology drives dynamic, programmable spaces that resonate deeply with their occupants.

The Moira Riviera Boutique Hotel in Goa, co-owned and co-founded by AVA, exemplifies his vision of hospitality architecture. Signed up by the responsible luxury brand of ITC, this hotel's design is a fusion of Portuguese and Mediterranean styles, built using local Goan materials,

Designing for Humans, not Robots

Vistasp Bhagwagar
Managing director & principal architect

AVA Designs Pvt Ltd

creating a stunning structure within a canopy of trees. The understated art and architecture reflect simplicity and authenticity, making it a true blue retreat architecture.

In Bhagwagar's view, AI will always be second to human intelligence. It can enhance efficiency and innovation, but the need for

human improvisation and intuition will never fade away. "Human intervention and disruption must not be discounted; technology has and will always be an aid," he asserts.

Bhagwagar believes that while technology can aid and inspire, architecture must be rooted in human experience, environmental adaptability, and cultural relevance. He implores young and upcoming architects and designers not to become overly reliant on technology and inhibit one's innate and inherent qualities.

● **KAMAYNI**

SUDHIR CHANDRA

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A Fascination for Complexity

An IIT-Roorkee graduate, Vivek Singh Rathore's Salient is a multidisciplinary design studio established in 2005 in Kolkata. Under his mentorship, the studio has won various prestigious national and international awards, and has a vision to evolve the new-age value system in the Indian design environment.

"The rich legacy and grain of Indian architecture always lead my imagination," says Rathore. Exposure to the "melody of architectural styles" as old as 600 years and to a vibrant platter of colonial designs during his formative years in West Bengal have been a source of inspiration. The artistic city of Kolkata fuelled his inclination to fine arts and design that laid the foundation of creative articulation. For Rathore, architecture is not merely a career but an extension of his lifelong hobby.

Rathore is an exponent of green design and sustainable architecture. Rathore's creative process is fuelled by a fascination for complexity, leading to deeper thinking to reach a unique cord of creativity. For him, every project is different and carries its visionary manifestation. When designing spaces, functionality serves as the starting point with technology providing crucial support, spirituality as the directive, and simplicity as the end product.

One standout project that exemplifies his vision is Raaj Kutir, a 5-star convention hotel transformed through adaptive reuse of an old and neglected, unviable public facility on a garbage dump. This sustainable design inducts technology and helps conserve the brilliant texture of the Bengal legacy and regional identity. This creative transformation is an inspiring example of how architectural ingenuity can reimagine neglected structures into landmarks of cultural and functional significance, preserving memories

Vivek Singh Rathore
Partner & principal architect
Salient

while revitalising urban spaces.

Rathore believes that AI has revolutionised architecture, enabling rapid iterations and fostering boundless imagination. He envisages AI creating a new era of global expressionism and global oneness. By bridging diverse ideas and styles, AI promises to shape a future where creativity transcends borders.

Rathore envisions three distinct schools of practice in architecture. The first emphasises the timeless classic fundamentalism and green technology. The second explores free forms as derived from complex mathematical algorithms of change and consumption, blending sustainability with technological innovation. The third champions minimalism rooted deeply in nature, cradle to cradle living and orthodox naturalism.

● KAMAYNI