



# WE'RE PAINTING THE TOWN GREEN

The main architectural challenges of our age are not so much about aesthetics and utility as they are about the environment. Green buildings are, without a doubt, the future of construction, and some of the examples featured here show that we might already be headed towards a greener tomorrow.

**I**ts buildings reflect a city's true character. Studying styles and patterns in architecture might be a good way — better even than studying history books — to understand the preoccupations and interests of an age, to get the hang of the zeitgeist. There was a time when architects, especially in Europe, were more concerned with aesthetics and less with utility. Then, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this equation was inverted in places like Soviet Russia, where buildings were designed for their utilitarian value alone. In the subsequent decades, the best of architects, like the

late Charles Correa, worked hard all their lives to achieve a balance of sorts between utility and beauty. Today, the concerns of our age are such that we must throw another important factor in this mix: the environment. The buildings of today not only have to meet the highest standards of beauty and utility, they also have to be environment-friendly.

So the future of architecture, without a doubt, is green. While in most Western countries construction laws are formulated with due regard to the environment, in India a lot still needs to be done in this respect. The on-

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going construction boom, especially around the National Capital Region, has come in response to a continual spike in real estate demand in these parts. But new buildings, new cities all come at a price. The cost is exacted not just

in financial terms, but also in terms of the direct impact new buildings can have on natural resources, on underground aquifers, on air quality levels and on the local power-supply grid. The challenge for an architect

is to diminish that impact to the minimum possible magnitude. And once you achieve that, what you get is a green building.

Public policy and urban development experts say that it's crucial for developing economies to invest large-heartedly on promoting green architecture. According to Guruprakash Sastry, regional manager, infrastructure at Infosys, green buildings should actually be called Sensible Buildings. After all, paying attention to climatic aspects of architecture is as good for the environment as it is cost-effective.

This week, we present pro-

files of four of the top-ranked green buildings in the country: they all have a platinum rating certificate issued by the authorised bodies. The examples collated here include a building each from Pune, Noida, Mysore and Chennai. All these establishments have had their annual carbon footprint reduced by 60-70%, thanks to their innovative and environmentally-aware designs. These are not the only green buildings India has — there are a handful more — but these are templates that architects of the future would do well to emulate.

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