

STONE POST

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How important are such trade fairs for improving the industrial scenario of any state?

They are very important. Almost 80% of the country's limestone, sandstone, Kota stone and marble is from Rajasthan. Houses are coming up; the hotel industry requires huge quantities of stone. Today the middle-income groups are emerging in a large way. Therefore, this group, being such a big chunk, is one of the highest consumers. The demand for stone is very high. With all the advancements in excavating, etc, it is more economically feasible for the industry. The sector is growing very fast; naturally it is a very important industry for Rajasthan. And such fairs provide the right environment for buyers and sellers to engage.

Rajasthan is one of the major stone producing states of the country, what policies and incentives does the State Government have in place to support its stone industry?

Today we have to compete with the other states. So we have to see that our policies are at par with the best... be it Gujarat, Maharashtra or Uttarakhand. So we are tuning up our policies. I have just taken over very recently and am looking at what can be done for the industry to help it grow.

With overseas participation from over 10 countries, what image of Rajasthan do you wish to send back with them?

You know the participation has grown astronomically. And more and more buyers are coming to India StoneMart. More and more exhibitors are coming. And so under one roof, they are able to interact with each other and the trade gets facilitated.

With JCB making its base in Rajasthan, do you see the state as an emerging investment destination for stone machinery and tools? Also what steps is the government taking to attracting the investors?

Absolutely, I see the state as a very conducive destination for investment in this area with so much excavation. The fact that they are eyeing the state for setting up means that correct policies are already in place. However, we are open to doing what further needs to be done.

Being a skill and labour intensive industry, what initiatives have been taken by the State Government for skill development and training of craftspeople in this industry?

Skill development and training of craftspeople is already taking place in a big way. And now we are going to accelerate.

There are a lot of SMEs been operating in the stone industry, how does the Government wish to support and bring them forward?

We already have the StoneMart as a wonderful platform for the SMEs to do business in a conducive environment. We are also planning more stone parks to facilitate their growth. The Government is ready to work with them. I'll be taking a round of the state to examine the problems and issues of this industry, where they feel handicapped. So, we will fine tune policy, see how we can meet their needs.

Is the State Government taking any steps towards standardisation of natural stone?

We have already set up a laboratory at CDOS, which has state-of-the-art infrastructure. It is, in fact, one of the best laboratories in the world with all the facilities for testing of stones, their strength, load-bearing capacity, the kind of pressure they

8 International
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Jaipur Exhibition & Convention Centre, Sitapura, Jaipur

can withstand. All those facilities are already there. And we are trying to educate the industry about putting certain norms in place. And we are getting a good response, especially from the exporters because they have to follow those norms—be they European or American Standards.



Gajendra Singh Khimsar
Rajasthan Industries Minister

Crafting future, together

'Smart'ness lies not only in modernity, but also in engaging with our environment, our past and our cultural ethos. That is the overarching theme at the first **Jaipur Architecture Festival**, finds **Stone Post**

A unique new feature of the India StoneMart 2015 is the Jaipur Architecture Festival for architects around the world. A first of its kind, the three-day festival has been organized by CDOS in association with Council of Architecture and the Indian Institute of Architects (IIA) and has more than 250 professionals exploring, discussing and dissecting various aspects of architecture.

It is fitting that the theme of the festival is 'Crafting Future Cities' with Jaipur being renowned for its 300-year-old superb planning, architecture and craftsmanship. Picking on this, Minister of State Urban Development & Housing, Rajpal Singh Shekhawat, said that it was critical to retain the heritage and culture while planning 'smart cities'. "Care should be taken," he stressed, "to synthesize various techniques and mediums to create a collective synergy, resonating and reflecting a city's unique characteristics."

On the economic front, he said, that infrastructure development is both capital and labour intensive industry. With architects being the connecting link between the stone industry

manufacturers and traders and the end-consumers; it is important for them to have an interactive platform like Jaipur Architecture Festival.

Chairperson C-DOS, Veenu Gupta traced back to the ideation of Jaipur Architecture Festival, which originated from the architectural visits to the state's stone clusters, organized by CoA and C-DOS. She hoped that State Government would continue to promote and assist the growth of stone industry. Delivering the keynote address, Padma Shri recipient and acclaimed architect BV Doshi talked about astronomy, cosmology, nature, seasons and, in general... life! However, when he finished speaking his speech, it seemed to be like a great lesson in architecture for all present. Drawing parallels between Sawai Jai Singh's Jaipur and Le Corbusier's Chandigarh, he extolled the vision of the maharaja and, under the guise of a history lesson, subtly brought in society's engagement with the field of architecture. Strolling through the shops of Johri Bazaar, the facades, the terraces, jharokhas, the walkways... he strolled through them while explaining their importance in modern times. "You can't

put life in buildings unless you have people with skills and a progressive mindset, living in them," he stressed. And the maharaja not just got the craftsmen to Jaipur, he said, he got entire communities to settle here and ply their trade; thereby creating Jaipur's world famous arts and crafts heritage. Development of 'smart' cities, he continued, starts well on blueprint but somewhere along the way, it loses track. In a subtle nod towards planners, he said, "One can't push the underprivileged and landless towards the outskirts. That will lead to ghetto



FROM THE DRAWING BOARD



Shamini Shanker-Jain studied Architecture at CEPT, School of Architecture, Ahmedabad. She has been practicing in the city of Jaipur since 1987 with the studio of Shamini Shanker + Pranay Deep ARCHITECTS.

Stone, as the new language

What was once a simple building material or purely decorative element has metamorphosed into a key ingredient of architectural planning, finds **Shamini Shanker-Jain**

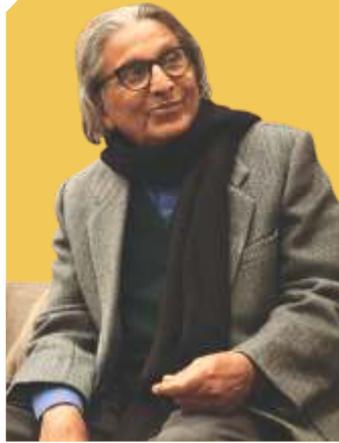
What is stone when it becomes a material for Architecture? How does the use of stone in buildings begin? The fascinating and colourful world of stone in architecture starts with the story of rocks hewn from quarries and moulded into fascinating precise dimensions. It is the story of India's rich natural resource of granite, marble, quartzite, sandstone and slate among many others. The journey of a once highly polished material today finds sheer respect in its raw, semi-finished condition, which adorns and clads some of the most beautiful edifices of today's architecture. With the advent of a new architectural vision





culture, what we are seeing today. Cities today should include development, sustenance and opportunity for all citizens.”

Jaipur, he said, had inspired him to draw the plan for Vidyanagar in Gujarat. The plan, as he showed via a slideshow, was to benefit all sections of the society. “You can’t see actual progress if the weaker sections of the society don’t progress with overall pace of development. While developing Vidyanagar and Kharghar in Mumbai, we made sure that the weaker sections get homes towards the core of an area. Then surrounding them are the middle and higher income groups. It leads to vibrancy and more comprehensive interaction as well as relationship-building across the economic diaspora.” ■



On Ajmer as a ‘smart’ city...

You know, there is a word called *kayakalp*. *Kayakalp* means also making people smarter than what they were before. Smart doesn’t mean only wearing a new dress even though you are old and getting tired. It is from the heart that you have to change. So, if people there have more vigour, more joy, feel more alive and pilgrims and other visitors to Ajmer feel comfortable, I would say a ‘smart’ city has been realised. By making buildings, one doesn’t make smart cities. Buildings are not isolated from life. I think that should be understood.

Padma Shri BV Doshi
Acclaimed architect

and colour palette, and with new technologies, the stone industry has revived this resource into one of the most prolific and ever inspiring building resource. Looking back at a bit of history it was during the Modern Architectural era and large-scale industrialization that the new architectural vision crumbled the course of many years of stone history obscuring all that was important to the past. There was a

complete rejection of archetypes as columns, arches, architraves, cumuli to name a few. The yearning for a pure homogeneous geometric form led to a conflict of material and colour. This huge cleansing process robbed stone off the richness of its colour and instead showed hues of greys and whites.

But not all was lost. The hues of granites, the labyrinth of veins in the stone patterns elevated simple building materials to architectural excellence. Stone surfaces became more dramatic and stone soon changed its appearance from a weighted load-bearing element to a thin non-load bearing screen that was arranged to form free and balanced patterns in architectural planning. This was the beginning of a new language. Today stone technology and trends have contributed to a remarkable metamorphosis of the stone surface. There has never been a

more bashful demonstration of surface finishes leading the industry towards a deliberate strategy to exploit the stone’s surface finish in its performance and finish.

Suddenly, the stone skin has got pride of place—ruggedness, sheen, smooth, antique, brushed, hammer tone, flame-treated, sand blasting are all familiar terms. Techniques of quarrying and cutting machines encourage the designers furthermore.

For a material that was sidelined by new technologies based on artificial materials, stone is today galloping in its research and development and that, along with its business potential, does not cease to amaze architects, interior designers, etc with its ever-changing scenario. ■





L to R: U Ramadas Kamath & RK Gupta, CEO, CDOS

WE MEAN BUSINESS...

CDOS joins hands with Infosys

Fulfilling the premise of India StoneMart 2015 as a critical networking platform for business, CDOS has come together in partnership with IT giant Infosys! "Center for Development of Stones (CDOS) will now be the official Stone Knowledge Partner to Infosys," announced said RK Gupta, CEO, CDOS while making a promising handshake with U Ramadas Kamath, executive VP, Infosys.

It happened like this. Kamath, who is visiting StoneMart from Bangalore to explore new options and stone range for an in-house project of Infosys, spread across 9-10 million sqm, met up with Gupta at the Stone of Rajasthan pavilion by CDOS. And a commitment was struck.

"Granite, marble, sandstone... Rajasthan has everything that one needs in stone. It is the expertise and proper feedback from the government departments which brings us here. We are excited to be here," said a beaming Kamath while affirming the commitment.



VISUALLY SPEAKING...

