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INSIGHT

TN GOVERNOR RAJENDRA VISHWANATH ARLEKAR ON IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

THREE PILLARS

DR NIRANJAN HIRANANDANI REVEALS WHAT MATTERS MOST IN REAL ESTATE VENTURES

UNPLUGGED

JARO EDUCATION CEO **RANJITA RAMAN** TALKS ABOUT SURVIVAL POST BYJU'S SHAKE-OUT

UNHYPE SUCCESS

VIJAY DEVERAKONDA'S BUSINESS HITS ₹1.3 CRORE IN TWO WEEKS!

Six Decades, Five Industries, One Builder

HOW **AMARJIT BAKSHI** BUILT A RENOWNED BRAND ACROSS FIVE KEY SECTORS

TIMES NETWORK

BULL IS ON THE TOP

BEARS TAKE A DROP

TRULY INDEPENDENT, TRULY AHEAD

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RAKSHITA MADAN
Senior Editor,
ET Now & ET Now
Swadesh - Digital

We are living through a period of extraordinary flux – on one hand AI investments are compelling the corporates to squeeze out jobs from the teams, and on the other hand, shifting geopolitical realities have landed us in a war economy globally. Being in a war economy comes at a price where safe-haven assets such as dollar, gold and silver skyrocket, essential commodities such as oil get more expensive (fuelling severe retail inflation). So, while consumption is threatening to take a hit lead by global job cuts, sticky and higher inflation are continuously tightening the budgets. Meanwhile, India's real GDP grew by 7.8% year-over-year in the first quarter (Q1) of fiscal year 2026–27 and Q1 corporate earnings also seemed resilient.

This dichotomy is clearly visible on Dalal Street as the benchmark indices are struggling to really go anywhere even though domestic investors are not shying away from pumping in money.

So what's the role India Inc can play in this scenario – can they help the government resolve some issues or they themselves a victim to the global headwinds in need of support? Over the years, ET Now.in has had the privilege of engaging with some of India's most influential founders, CEOs, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and corporate leaders. Through these conversations, we have gained access not only to boardroom strategies and business milestones, but also to the human stories behind them - stories of resilience, ambition, leadership, and purpose.

This edition of ET NOW Business Leaders brings together a distinguished showcase of the voices that are shaping the future of business. These are individuals who have built iconic brands, scaled disruptive ventures, steered legacy enterprises through transformation, and contributed meaningfully to India's growth story. Their insights reflect the evolving nature of leadership in a world defined by rapid technological change, shifting consumer expectations, economic uncertainty, and unprecedented opportunities.

What emerges across these interviews is a common thread: an unwavering belief in innovation, a commitment to creating value, and the courage to embrace change. While their industries, journeys, and perspectives may differ, they share a deep understanding that leadership today is about more than delivering results. It is about building sustainable businesses, empowering people, fostering trust, and creating lasting impact.

India stands at a defining moment in its economic journey. As the nation charts its path toward becoming a global economic powerhouse, the role of visionary leadership has never been more critical. The leaders featured in these pages are helping shape that future, driving growth, creating jobs and strengthening India's position in the world.

This magazine captures the ideas, experiences, and perspectives that have emerged through our conversations, offering readers a unique opportunity to learn from some of the brightest minds in business.

We hope these stories inspire you as much as they have inspired us. Whether you are an entrepreneur building the next big venture, a corporate leader navigating change, an investor seeking new opportunities, or simply someone passionate about the world of business, these insights will serve as a source of knowledge, motivation, and perspective.

As always, ET Now.in remains committed to bringing you conversations that matter and stories that shape the future.

Happy reading.

—Team ET NOW Business Leaders

To share your thoughts, write to:
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Building Beyond the Transaction

From IIT Delhi's first graduating batch to building enterprises across engineering, infrastructure, manufacturing and luxury real estate, Amarjit Bakshi has spent nearly six decades challenging convention. A first-generation industrialist and the founder of Central Park Estates, his journey is one of extraordinary enterprise, enduring institutions and a vision of luxury defined by excellence, hospitality and Nature's Lux.

Some entrepreneurs build businesses. Others build institutions that shape industries, generate livelihoods and create opportunities for generations.

Amarjit Bakshi belongs to the latter tradition.

A first-generation, self-made industrialist, he has built enterprises across remarkably diverse sectors, each contributing to a larger legacy of engineering, innovation and institution-building. The businesses he established have grown into substantial operations, supporting the livelihoods of countless families and creating opportunities that extend far beyond their founder.

His influence is measured not simply by the companies he has created, but by the industries he has entered, the institutions he has established and the people whose futures have been shaped by those enterprises.

Today, as Founder and Chairman of Central Park Estates, that entrepreneurial vision finds expression in some of the NCR's most distinctive luxury residential destinations.

In an industry where ambition is often measured by the speed of expansion, the size of a portfolio or the scale of an enterprise, Bakshi has pursued a different measure of success.

His ambition has never been simply to build more. It has been to build better — to create exceptional destinations, refine them relentlessly and establish standards of quality that endure across generations.

Where others might see a completed development, he sees opportunities for improvement. The relation-

ship with the customer does not end at possession; in many ways, that is where the true responsibility begins.

At the heart of his philosophy is a conviction that customer trust is an enterprise's greatest asset. Such trust cannot be purchased or replicated through capital alone. It requires a culture of service, attention to detail and an unwavering commitment to delivering on promises.

The objective is not to perfect one development in isolation, but to establish a model of luxury living that can be carried into new communities without compromising the standards that made it exceptional.

It is the difference between expanding a portfolio and building a legacy.

And Central Park's ambitions are considerable. Beyond its landmark developments in Gurugram, the group has assembled more than 600 acres at Flower Valley in Sohna, south of Gurugram, alongside significant landholdings in Goa and a pipeline of approximately 20 projects.

The scale points towards a much larger future. But the philosophy remains unchanged: growth should follow the ability to deliver excellence, not come at its expense.

An Entrepreneur Before Everything Else

In 1967, Bakshi graduated in Civil Engineering as part of IIT Delhi's first graduating batch.

From humble beginnings, he went on to establish businesses across sectors central to India's infrastructure, manufacturing and urban development.

His entrepreneurial journey included the founding of OSE, which grew into an established enterprise in highways and infrastructure development.

He subsequently built businesses across automotive engineering, precision manufacturing and technology. Continental Engines supplied international automobile manufacturers including BMW, Mercedes, Opel and Peugeot, while BAXY Auto Components and three-wheeler manufacturing operations expanded his industrial footprint into mobility.

Through BAXY Engineering, his interests encompass aluminium foundries and precision manufacturing, producing complex castings and automotive components. Other ventures extend to municipal equipment for road and sewer cleaning and electric vehicles.

BAXY Infotec represents another dimension of this diversification, undertaking city-level command-and-control centre projects supporting urban management and infrastructure operations.

Few entrepreneurial journeys span such different industries, each demanding its own expertise, infrastructure and capacity for innovation.



Together, these enterprises represent more than diversification. They reflect an industrialist who has repeatedly created platforms for enterprise, employment and economic opportunity, building businesses capable of sustaining livelihoods and developing identities of their own.

Across nearly six decades, there have been successes, setbacks and reinventions. Yet one principle has remained constant: the conviction that the established way of doing something is not necessarily the best.

The Courage to Build Differently

At Central Park Resorts in Gurugram, this philosophy took an ambitious form.

Bakshi pioneered the concept of taking vehicular movement entirely underground, creating a 48-acre resort-style township with a completely vehicle-free ground level.

At a time when such planning was virtually unheard of in Indian residential developments, it represented a radical departure from convention. The concept subsequently became an influential benchmark for luxury residential planning across Gurugram and the wider NCR.

The engineering decision transformed the living environment. Rather than allowing roads and traffic to divide residential spaces, the surface could be devoted to landscaped grounds, pedestrian freedom, recreation and tranquillity.

What began as an unconventional infrastructure solution became a defining feature of the Central Park experience.

It also demonstrated something fundamental about the founder's approach: true innovation is not necessarily about adding more amenities. Sometimes, it is about rethinking the development itself.

Creating Destinations, Not Just Developments

At Central Park Flower Valley in Sohna, south of Gurugram, the vision has expanded to an entirely different scale.

With more than 600 acres procured and approximately 250 acres developed, Flower Valley is conceived as a self-contained mini-city bringing together luxury residences, education, hospitality, recreation and community infrastructure.

The larger master plan also envisages significant commercial development, alongside healthcare and senior living, reflecting an ambition to create a complete ecosystem where people can live, work and access essential services within a thoughtfully planned community.

At its heart is the Imperial Club, a magnificent clubhouse spanning more than 250,000 square feet. Among the region's most ambitious private residential club facilities, it reflects the scale and sophistication of the lifestyle Central Park seeks to deliver.

Its extensive leisure, recreational and hospitality offerings reinforce the idea that a residential development can provide an experience comparable to that of an exceptional resort.

The Imperial Club also establishes a standard for future hospitality and clubhouse developments within the wider Central Park vision.

Spirituality and inclusiveness are equally integral to his vision. At Flower Valley, dedicated spaces for different faiths — including a Hindu temple, gurdwara, mosque and church — reflect his belief that a truly thriving community must embrace India's diversity and secular spirit.

Vedanya School and extensive green spaces further contribute to a development conceived not merely as a collection of buildings, but as an integrated way of life.

Nature's Lux: A Different Definition of Luxury

Luxury has traditionally been associated with architectural grandeur, prestigious addresses, expensive finishes and elaborate amenities.

Central Park embraces these aspirations while offering a broader interpretation through its defining philosophy: Nature's Lux.

It places nature, tranquillity, safety, hospitality, longevity and quality of life at the centre of the residential experience.

The freedom to move through beautifully landscaped surroundings, the reassurance of a secure environment, access to outstanding recreational facilities and the experience of attentive service all become part of a more complete definition of luxury.

For Bakshi, considerations such as greenery, air quality and everyday wellbeing are fundamental to creating desirable places to live.

The philosophy extends across residential formats, perhaps most strikingly through The Rooms Collection.

In a market where studio apartments and smaller residences have often proved challenging to position as desirable luxury products, Central Park has transformed the category into a sought-after offering.

Through intelligent design, refined finishes, exceptional hospitality and thoughtfully conceived surroundings, The Rooms Collection has attracted strong buyer interest, with residences selling rapidly and earning particular appeal among Japanese and other international residents.



Its success demonstrates the strength of a philosophy that places the living experience above conventional assumptions about size.

The underlying proposition remains consistent: true luxury is not determined by square footage alone, but by the quality of the life it enables.

When the Sale Is Only the Beginning

For all his emphasis on engineering, architecture and the prestige of his developments, one of Bakshi's most enduring principles concerns something less tangible: responsibility.

A home is not simply a product delivered to a customer. It is where families establish their lives over many years.

This places lasting importance on hospitality, maintenance, responsiveness and the everyday experience of residents.

Across his businesses, the entrepreneur has consistently emphasised three priorities: happy customers, content employees and secure partners. For Central Park, the aspiration is to create a culture of service that residents can recognise and trust across communities, regardless of where the company expands.

That continuity is central to the brand's long-term ambition. Buildings and amenities can be reproduced; an exceptional hospitality culture must be cultivated and sustained.

Success Beyond the Balance Sheet

Bakshi's commitment to institution-building also extends beyond commercial enterprise.

A significant early benefactor of the IIT Delhi Endowment Fund, he has maintained a longstanding relationship with the institution that helped shape his career.

His philanthropic interests encompass education, community welfare and assistance for those in need, through initiatives associated with Vedanya School, Jagrati Sewa Trust and the Kabir Foundation.

Educational, welfare and healthcare initiatives for construction workers and their families reflect the same sense of responsibility.

The underlying belief is consistent: success carries greater meaning when it improves lives beyond the immediate business.

Building an Institution, Not Just a Portfolio

With an extensive development pipeline, substantial landholdings and ambitions reaching beyond Delhi NCR, Central Park Estates is entering another significant chapter.

Its next challenge is not simply to introduce more luxury developments, but to take an established philosophy of distinctive design, exceptional hospitality and enduring customer relationships to a wider audience.

For the founder, the test of an extraordinary residential experience is not whether it can be created once, but whether its standards can be sustained as the organisation grows.

His journey stands as a testament to what a first-generation entrepreneur can achieve: building enterprises across industries, creating livelihoods, shaping communities and establishing institutions whose influence extends far beyond their founder.

A building can be replicated. An amenity can be reproduced. Even architectural grandeur can be surpassed.

But a culture of care, earned trust and an uncompromising commitment to excellence are considerably harder to recreate.

And that, perhaps, is the legacy Amarjit Bakshi is building. ●

RECOGNITION

Amarjit Bakshi has received the IIT Delhi Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding Contribution to National Development and the IIT Delhi Distinguished Alumni Service Award. He has also been featured in 100 Great IITians: Dedicated to the Service of the Nation.

Central Park Estates received Hurun India 2026 recognition for Pioneering Excellence in Concept-Led Luxury Living in Indian Real Estate, while his businesses have earned recognition across engineering, infrastructure and real estate.

CENTRAL PARK IN NUMBERS

600+ acres	PROCURED AT FLOWER VALLEY
~250 acres	DEVELOPED AT FLOWER VALLEY
250,000+ sq. ft.	IMPERIAL CLUB, FLOWER VALLEY
48 acres	COMPLETELY VEHICLE-FREE GROUND LEVEL AT CENTRAL PARK RESORTS
~20 projects	CURRENTLY IN THE PIPELINE



Why 'shubh labh' matters *more than 'suddha labh'?*

Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar highlighted the importance of ethical business practices at the ET Now.in Realty Conclave & Awards 2026 South Edition, explaining why Shubh Labh must take precedence over profit-driven Suddha Labh.

By **Prabhat Shukla**

At ET Now.in Realty Conclave & Awards 2026 South Edition in Chennai, the newly appointed Governor of Tamil Nadu, Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar delivered a message that went beyond the usual formalities of an awards function. In his first public appearance after assuming office, the Governor highlighted a principle rooted in Indian tradition and particularly relevant to the real estate and business community: the distinction between Shubh Labh and Suddha Labh.

Commercial success must be built on ethical foundations

Acknowledging the rapid expansion of the real estate sector across India, he observed that becoming a real estate developer or dealer has become a common aspiration. He said he had no objection to people entering the business anywhere in the country, but emphasised that commercial success must be built on ethical foundations. Profits earned through unethical means may come quickly, he cautioned, but they are unlikely to last. Sustainable businesses, he said, can only be built on a foundation of integrity and ethical practices.

The Governor then explained the significance of the two concepts at the heart of his address. Labh means profit, but profit, he argued, must be Shubh auspicious, righteous and earned through fair means. Shubh Labh represents gains made through ethical business practices without harming others or infringing on their rights.

In contrast, he described Suddha Labh as an approach that places profit above all other considerations, with little regard for the means used to achieve it. "How do I get that profit? What are the means? It doesn't matter. I want only profit," he said, highlighting what he sees as a troubling shift in the business environment.

Western thinking that prioritises profit above everything

He also contrasted this approach with what he described as Western thinking that prioritises profit above everything else. Indian tradition, he said, has long placed an ethical condition on the pursuit of wealth: profit must be Shubh. This principle is reflected in the familiar phrase "Shubh Labh", commonly written at the entrances of homes and shops. The absence of "Suddha Labh" from this cultural practice, he suggested, reflects an understanding that prosperity must be accompanied by ethical conduct.

The Governor also shared a personal detail about the occasion, saying he had assumed charge that morning after arriving from Thiruvananthapuram the previous night. The official notification of his appointment had been issued just two days earlier.

"This is my first public function," he said, adding with a smile, "So in a way, this is also a Shubh Labh for me — that I am attending such a good function."

His message was clear: while awards and recognition are important, lasting success depends on how businesses earn their profits. For the real estate sector, which is closely linked to urbanisation, property ownership and the development of communities, ethical practices are particularly significant.

With its rich cultural heritage, Tamil Nadu has an opportunity to reinforce these principles and set an example for businesses across the country. As commercial activity and urban development accelerate, the Governor's address served as a reminder that profit alone cannot define success. Lasting prosperity, he argued, comes from ensuring that the means of earning are as important as the gains themselves.

Here are edited excerpts from his speech:

Nowadays we have seen very fast moving products in our country are dealing in lands that is the fast moving product or fast moving business. My only contention is that the business which we try to do has to have some ethics and on those ethics based businesses will flourish. Sometimes if we do some business on non-ethical basis it looks that we get money but it is for a shorter period.

If you have to have a sustainable business, sustainable enterprise, it should be on based on ethical some ethical issues, some ethical principles that is always needed everywhere. And because of all such businesses particularly in real estate and real developers we are developing our villages into cities.



We are here in a very big city of Chennai which has got a very big history also. But all these things we have we have developed for the years together and now the city of Chennai is growing still further. Population grows, infrastructure grows, accommodation increases, everything increases because of the pressure of the people who are settling here. And that we call as the urbanization.

We are looking at our villages, rural areas also. How to urbanize them? How to develop them? Unfortunately, we are just concentrating on the word urbanization means doing away with ruralization. The very rural aspects of our villages or the rural areas are being forgotten. Development is not necessarily urbanization.

In urban areas we have development no doubt we get better facilities, better accommodation, better transport, communication, but at the same time we want our villages also to be developed. But mind you, urbanization of a rural area doesn't mean that we should do away with the ethics and ethos and all that that we have in our villages. Many a times we travel while traveling we don't even understand where the city has ended and where the village has started where the urban area has ended and where rural area starts. We do not understand at all that is not the urbanization.

Urbanization doesn't mean westernization. Maintaining our face of our villages and having better facilities can be called as urbanization. That is where we have to concentrate and that is where our ethics come.

We have two words in our vocabulary. One is called as the 'shuha labh'. Labh means profit and labh has to be subh (means good/ethics). These days we are moving to 'shudha labh' – we are not bothered about the means to achieve the profit.

Only profit. How do I get that profit? What are the means of that profit? Doesn't matter for me. The balance of ethics to attain those profits - this we have to maintain. Somehow we are missing this today.

I still believe because we all have a very big cultural heritage in this country. Our 'labh' has to be on a principled-based business.

And Tamil Nadu particularly where we are sitting in this state culturally very high level of culture here. It is the driven force for everybody since my inception since I have taken oath as the governor of this state.

Today after my appointment as the governor of Tamil Nadu that is just two days back when the notification has come day before yesterday. Last night I came here and today I have taken charge as the governor of Tamil Nadu. This is my first public function that I am attending. And I hope my state of Tamil Nadu will certainly give an example to the whole of our country in this particular section. ●



‘Skilling, quality and implementation - *3 important pillars of real estate growth’*

The real estate today is not about providing homes, consumers require world-class amenities, lifestyle-related activities such as shopping, hospitals, etc. and also they demand automation in the houses that can grow with the growing technological demands. How to take our infrastructure to next level? There is one group that has done it many many years ago. Joining ETNow.in’s **Rakshita Madan** for that conversation is **Dr. Niranjan Hiranandani** to discuss about how real estate can be a pillar of economic growth.

He dons many hats and needs no introduction. The founder and chairman of Hiranandani group best known for townships in Powai and Panvel. He’s also the chairman of NAREDCO. He has played a pivotal role in shaping policy and industry dialogue.

Q India is witnessing a major shift in the geography of economic growth with the new business districts, logistics corridors and integrated urban centers emerging beyond traditional metros. From your perspective, what will it take to build the next truly global gateway for business and commerce in India?

A I think we are in a beautiful situation today; we are the fastest-growing nation in the world at 7.4% GDP growth. It doesn’t sound big but it is the fastest. We

have been able to do this in spite of the headwinds that we have - the Middle East war and the growth. So we add, 35 kilometers of national highway per day. Mumbai alone will see 300 kilometers of metro added in the next two years, completed. We have a cross-harbor bridge. We have a second airport operational and a third airport is planned. We have two ports. We have a third port planned. We have a coastal road which is an envy of most people of other cities. And what we do not have to take it to the next level? I think execution. So what is it that we already have is huge amount of platforms that we do and it's now up to us in order to do it. There are gaps in every area, but I think we should sensibly fill these gaps in order to make an India which is an envy of everybody. So, having said what I have said, I think the future of India is fantastic. We all have an economic possibility second to none, and we should be proud to be Indian.

Q With the Mumbai metropolitan region undergoing a massive transformation through projects such as Navi Mumbai International Airport, connectivity corridors, logistics, and infrastructure. How do you see this reshaping the region's role in India's next phase of economic growth?

A The Mumbai 3.0, which is where the infrastructure is headed into a $1trillion economy in the next seven years. What does it mean? India today is a $4 trillion economy for the whole of India, and we are targeting just to get Mumbai 3.0 to be $1 trillion economy.

So obviously, the target is to create economic growth, an opportunity second to none. So, whether it is in terms of creating IT centers, whether it is data centers, whether it's going to be hospitality, whether it's going to be new town centers that we talk about, housing that we need to do - all this and more. I think also the fact that we are going to have like an aerosity kind of thing; then Alibaug as a corridor of Mumbai 3.0 extension; we will have the Karjat-Panvel corridor. So, all in all, the areas just across the harbuor as you cross the Atal bridge, is going to see a growth story second to none in the world if it happens the way Mr. Farnavis has designed it and executing it. I think it looks like a beautiful story in a fast forward.



Q So as we build the new urban centers around infrastructure and economic corridors, how do we ensure that we are not just creating commercial hubs but genuinely livable, sustainable and future-ready cities that can compete with global business destinations?

A I think with the Middle East war, we have an opportunity and we shouldn't lose this opportunity because at the time when we are creating new cities we know what is not sustainable, we understand the congestion of Mumbai - inadequate roads, water supply uh all the other aspects of it in terms of schools colleges and others we have the support services but we don't have the quality of infrastructure and we missed it all these years. What is needed to do Mumbai 3.0 is really to lay the entire infrastructure up front. If you do the roads, if you make the hospitals, if you make the schools, we are getting foreign universities to come over there. All these aspects of it had to be put up front. And if we can do that really, and they're investing into it, but if they can do it fast enough before the actual development takes place the quality of the infrastructure the quality of life of the persons, and the sustainability is going to be maintained. So I think all you have to do is instead of as earlier you would put the buildings first and create the infrastructure afterwards we hope that the infrastructure will come up front and the buildings construction will be later. I think we need to put the cart the horse before the cart, instead of the cart before the horse. I think that would also make for better planning of the cities and better infrastructure and better civic amenities.

Q When you compare India or Mumbai to any other global city, especially to China, there's a marked difference and that difference very clearly is the

infrastructure. What do you think it will take for India to reach there?

A Too much. We are far behind China as far as development is concerned, I think the dictatorial society has used it in a positive manner to create infrastructure, industry, development, probably the best in the world and we have a huge amount of catchup we need to do.

But we have to understand we are a democratic country and we have to cater for all the other aspects of it which in the earlier stages China did not have to do. Now having achieved a sense of balance and a growing middle class and also expectation that we are able to reach the poorest of poor in terms of direct money transfers in terms of subsidies in terms of gas and other things. I think now time has come where government has to plan. We also have to educate properly. One of the gaps in education that we have today is - skilling. I think uh we have a lot of education which is there but uh many of the skilling jobs we are not able to do. Let me give you an example in my construction industry. We are today 2 million construction workers short. 2 million. And if anybody and what kind of jobs carpenters, fitters, plumbers, electricians, wiremen, barb benders, etc. And any unskilled worker who is skilled for 6 months will get three times the wages from an unskilled task.

Q **Education cities and logistical hubs are being developed in India at a very fast pace and even budget 2026 laid out uh the vision for that. So how does that lend to business growth and urban development also can we expect an influx of foreign students with that happening?**

A I think the national education policy 2020 was very clear. The appropriateness for getting education in a different way is there. The problem is implementation. So again road map is very clear. Internship cross-functional education. So a science students can learn finance, an engineer can learn economics. With a cross-functional training and improvement of skill sets, students can be made appropriate for the various challenges that we have in the economy. For instance, AI.

How can you have any education now without AI being a part of it? The pedagogies of teaching and learning need to be changed. The old things, some of the syllabus which I'm reading at the university level, something I was taught 45 years ago that's still in the education process and it is out of date. So all these changes need to be done rapidly. We need to do cross-functional skilling and those which are appropriate to industry and industry needs to take more responsibility in education institutions to assist and teach at the grassroot level. lot of online teaching which is possible now.

Q **We were talking about the new airports, the new expressways, the new corridors that are coming up and there are lot of land parcels on both sides of these projects that are available for monetization. What is the best way to monetize it, which can also help boost the economic growth?**

A I think both the government and the private sector understand this very well and you can see the kind of monetization the government is doing. You've seen the latest auctions which have taken place both in MMRDA BKC and also SIDCO. They have got the highest prices in the world. So monetization is taking place.

The private sector also has understood it. But we have to understand that it's okay to have a road. But do you have the other supporting infrastructure? You just can't have a road and try to create this. You need schools, you need hospitals, you need police, you need fire brigade, you need water supply, you need public transport. So I think master planning and execution of master plan responsibility has to be taken very seriously now. We had good reason to say the British made Mumbai and hence, we are still stuck with a lot of old things that are there. But in the new places, we have no excuse left. You better do it right now.

Otherwise, you're going to be blamed for it that we as Indians, as Bharatis, we did not do something right where we were creating new things. So it's our bigger responsibility today and you have nobody else but ourselves to blame for it. So I think we should do it well and I'm sure we will. Our chief minister is actually working very hard. I hope the implementation at the grassroot level follows the guidelines that he is really giving us.

Q **In your own business, where where do you think the next leg of growth can come from?**

A See people understand homes. Chhat can be Antila, Chhat can be Jopra, it doesn't matter both the extremes are houses but when it comes to cities I think all the rest of it becomes more important - school, hospitals, shopping, entertainment, sports activities, gardens, pPlaces where people can meet and other things should be there. We did it 37 years ago in Powai and then Thane and Panvel, and other places. But now I think every project which is coming up needs to think in those terms. The government, of course, in new areas needs to do it. Some are being planned. I'm only worried in many places execution is weak and I hope that the focus on education of the plans so it's not just a plan and actually bad execution. We need to do it, and again I'll repeat quality is not being enforced to the extent it should both in the private sector and the government sector. Nobody should tolerate bad quality anymore in India. ●

‘Many EdTech firms chased growth, we focused on…,’



Jaro Education CEO Ranjita Raman talks about surviving post Byju’s shake-out, market conditions after listing

On the personal front, Ranjita Raman also opened up about her challenges as a woman and a mother

By **Rakshita Madan**

Smallcap EdTech firm, Jaro Education started operations in 2009 and was listed on 30 September, 2025. Jaro is known for its partnerships with institutions such as IIM Ahmedabad, XLRI, IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, Symbiosis, etc., and its association with Vikrant Massey. It grew from an employee base of about 20-30 professionals at inception to over 1,000 across India, now.

While the EdTech sector got a steep jump during Covid due to physical restrictions, many startups failed and shut shop after life came back to normalcy post-COVID. Byju’s, for example, reached a valuation of $22 billion before it went for insolvency proceedings and the founder Byju Raveendran got caught in a legal tussle.

Ranjita Raman, CEO, Jaro Education, spoke to ET Now.in’s Rakshita Madan on how Jaro survived the ups and downs and managed to stay afloat. She also talked about the use cases of AI in EdTech industry. Raman also talked about the tough market experience where many companies that got listed last year struggle to give returns to their investors, trading below their issue price.

Read on the edited excerpts:

Q Jaro got listed last year. Take us through the journey — from the startup phase to becoming a listed company.

A When Jaro Education was founded, online education was not very familiar or accepted among corporates or working professionals. People believed that online education was just recorded content, would not add value, and that the degree would not be accepted.

However, we strongly believed that within a few years, online education would become the future. With that aspiration, Jaro Education was started, and I moved from NetHR (a group company) to Jaro Education as a counsellor.

At that time, the company had around 20–30 counsellors and about four to five leaders, some from competition and some from banking industry. I was one of the counsellors and started learning continuously as the company also started growing.

Although there was a lot of rejection for online education initially, we believed that the market would gradually accept it. We expanded from one office to multiple offices across metros and later Tier-II cities while building teams, leaders, processes and systems.

After nearly five years of hard work, we realised that we had started building the market for online education. The acceptance increased gruaddually, which gave us confidence to continue building the business.

When COVID hit in 2020, the acceptance of online education grew multi-fold. Corporates also became more welcoming towards online degrees and certifications. Upskilling became extremely important, and between 2020 and 2025 the business was growing at the rate of 35–40%.

On September 30, 2025, we got listed, we became one of the leading players in online higher education and upskilling. The journey was not smooth. There were lot of rejections, challenges, market competition and resistance to online education.

Q Besides COVID, what were the biggest turning points for Jaro?

A A major turning point came around 2017–18 when we started partnering with several institutions instead of just one. We were fortunate to collaborate with some of the finest institutions globally.

Even before COVID, we had successfully convinced many institutions to adopt online education. We built the complete ecosystem required to take their offline content online while ensuring that quality was not compromised.

From 2015 onwards, we kept scaling the number of institutional partners by demonstrating how online education could help them grow successfully without affecting their brand image.

We started our operations with one institution - Welingkar Institute of Management. From the beginning, we wanted to work with the top institutions.

Initially, institutions were concerned about their brand image. They questioned whether moving online would dilute their positioning or quality.

Q When Jaro got listed last year, many other companies took to the primary markets but since then secondary market has been struggling, leaving many investors waiting for returns. Many IPOs that listed with a premium are currently trading below their issue price. How do you view the stock market outlook from an investor perspective?

A If we look at the current IPO market, there has been a lot of turbulence because of geopolitical challenges. So, I believe the issue is not limited to one business or one sector; it is a broader business environment challenge. From a broader lens, I feel this will stabilise and should deliver better returns in the coming months. It requires a little more patience, and I believe the market will improve from here.

Q The EdTech sector witnessed tremendous growth during COVID, but the post-pandemic period has been challenging. We saw companies like Byju's struggle. How do you view the current business environment and what was different at Jaro?

A For the education industry, one thing we have seen is that success and failure have both come very quickly for many companies over the last decade. In my view, two factors played a very important role. The first is working discipline, and the second is financial discipline.

Many EdTech companies were heavily funded and, therefore, did not monitor their spending closely in the initial stages. That eventually led to difficult situations. I genuinely felt bad because we are all part of the same industry and have been peers at one point.

Working discipline is extremely important. Businesses need to strengthen their fundamentals from the very beginning instead of only chasing growth. It is equally important to stabilise unit economics because if you focus only on growth, you don't always know where you'll end up.

Financial discipline is equally critical — knowing where to spend and how much to spend. Some of the challenges across the sector were also driven by very heavy investments in marketing and branding, which created tremendous pressure on building a profitable business model.

Fundamentally, every business should focus on generating profits from the very beginning. If that discipline is maintained, such situations can largely be avoided. While the current environment remains somewhat unpredictable, I am very confident that the market will improve."

Q What were three factors that helped Jaro not go down the same road as Buyju's?

A I would say the first factor is discipline.

The second is being consistent with the business. When I say consistency, I mean consistency in strat-

egy. We didn't start doing ten things at one point in time. We wanted to excel at one thing first and then move to the second. That has been one of the most prominent reasons why we were successful.

The third is leadership stability; we always held each other together, even during the tough times. Hats off to all the leaders who stood by the company for several years. The average experience of the leadership team within Jaro is more than a decade. Our leadership development has been very, very strong, and that's one of the fundamental reasons why Jaro could sustain itself despite extremely challenging market situations.

Q How are you using AI in your business?

A AI is essential to scale and improve business efficiency. We consistently train our teams on role-specific AI applications, including back-office operations, counselling, student support and technology.

We are investing heavily in AI. We are using Agentic AI to provide better learner information and counselling experiences. AI is also embedded into our Learning Management System to create a better learning experience where students can learn at their own pace.

We also use AI on our alumni platform Jaro Connect by offering small AI courses so that learners continue to upskill even after completing their programmes.

Although it took some time initially, I believe that over the next six to eight months we will make significant progress in the usage of AI.

Q Do you see AI replacing counsellors?

A We discuss this topic frequently, and our approach is not to replace counsellors but to improve efficiency.

Base-level task redundancy, calling, fundamental role checks can be done through AI, while counsellors can focus on better roles like conducting meetings, providing real-time information, guidance and helping learners choose the right programmes.

Our objective is to improve efficiency, not create layoffs. We have consciously decided to scale with AI rather than replace people.

Q Do you think educational institutions are doing enough to prepare students for AI?

A Some institutions are prepared, while others are still in the process of adapting. We work closely with institutions to help them build the ecosystem required for AI-enabled learning. Every institution is at a different stage of adoption, but we are supporting them in integrating AI into their programmes and helping bridge those gaps, so we ensure the ecosystem is ready.

Q Ranjita, take us through your journey as a professional, talk about your personal challenges as a woman, as a mother.

A My journey started when I came to Mumbai. My fundamental qualification was in fashion design. However, that industry did not suit me well, and I wanted to do something different. I then got an opportunity to work with NetHR, which is one of the group companies of Jaro Education. It was an HR role, and I really enjoyed working there.

Then I took up the role of a counsellor at Jaro Education. First three years were fundamental roles of counsellor then team leader then manager. After 3-3.5 years, I was expecting a baby, I was handling national sales at that point of time, we had 12 offices. I had a challenge then as sales had targets to be met and also didn't want my aspirations to be dissolved just because of motherhood. I was not able to choose what to give priority to. I worked till 9th month and then took a very short maternity break of 45 days after my daughter was born.

I came back with her to work. I know a lot of friends, women, who left their jobs and career because they had a long break or stretch, expectations from family, etc. So after a short break I asked management for an exception to allow me to bring my baby and nanny to office. They supported and allowed me to bring in, I continued to bring her in till she was 5. That support helped me deal with the emotional instability of leaving the child at home.

Over the years, I grew ranks and opportunities kept coming in so I continued.

Q We see a lot of women in the workforce at junior, mid and even middle-management levels. But when we talk about top management level. Do you think corporates can do something to change this and help more women reach leadership positions?

A I think corporates have a very limited role to play in helping women reach the boardroom. Ultimately, it comes down to an individual's resilience.

I have worked with a lot of women-at junior levels, mid-levels, and even within my family and neighbourhood. One thing I have observed is that many of them want everything in life to be perfectly balanced. But if you want to reach the boardroom, you have to make a trade-offs. You have to trade off your social life, always being around everyone, and sometimes even your me-time.

Many women seek a perfect work-life balance. As a mother and as a woman, you have additional responsibilities, and you must accept that you can't be everywhere at the same time. Choose what is right for you and choose your aspiration. ●

Vijay Deverakonda's UNHYPE business hits ₹1.3 crore in 2 weeks: *'This is just the beginning...'*



Vijay Deverakonda's UNHYPE skincare business sells 10,000 signature routines in two weeks, generating ₹1.3 crore. The actor reveals expansion plans across skincare, haircare, bodycare, quick commerce and international markets.

By **Eshita Bhargava**

Vijay Deverakonda's skincare venture UNHYPE has recorded an early commercial milestone, selling out 10,000 VD Signature Routines within two weeks and generating Rs 1.3 crore in revenue, according to the company. The launch edition comprised 30,000 individual skincare products across two routines, Acne Safe and Brightening. Each routine follows a three-step format of face wash, moisturiser and sunscreen.

The limited-edition routines opened for pre-booking on September 11 and sold out within the two-week window. The brand is now looking to move beyond its initial launch and expand its product range and distribution. The development comes as Deverakonda increasingly builds a portfolio outside films, with the actor taking an active role in businesses and consumer ventures.

Vijay Deverakonda on why UNHYPE is different

In an exclusive conversation with ETNow.in, Deverakonda spoke about the thinking behind UNHYPE and why he wanted to build products rather than simply associate his name with a consumer brand. The actor said his interest in entrepreneurship comes partly from his own experiences of struggling to find products he wanted in India.

"I am really passionate about building things that I needed growing up. That I felt I didn't have access to growing up or it was really hard getting them growing up," Deverakonda told ET Now Digital.

He said that even after becoming an actor, he often had to look overseas for products that improved his quality of life. "But I had to get them from the US or Europe which is inconvenient, which is a lot of effort," he said. That experience eventually shaped the idea behind UNHYPE.

"So I am like how can I bring that quality of things that I like, things that I need to India. So that I can use them firstly because I need them. And then bring it to the millions of people who also need such things," Deverakonda said.

UNHYPE sells 10,000 routines in two weeks

The first commercial test for the skincare venture came soon after its launch. UNHYPE sold all 10,000 VD Signature Routines offered as part of the limited launch edition. With three products in each routine, the sell-out translated into 30,000 individual skincare products.

The two routines were designed around different skincare concerns, with the Acne Safe routine aimed at acne-prone skin and the Brightening routine focused on dullness and pigmentation. The company generated Rs 1.3 crore from the launch edition during the two-week period. Speaking after the sell-out, Deverakonda said the response had exceeded expectations.

"I genuinely want to thank everyone who trusted us and chose to make UNHYPE a part of their everyday skincare. We knew we had built something we believed in, but seeing 10,000 routines sell out in two weeks is incredible," he said.

The actor added that the brand was already working on a restock.

"We're completely sold out right now, and we're working to restock as soon as possible. To everyone who missed out this time we're sorry. We're coming back with more. This is just the beginning. There's a lot more coming from UNHYPE."

'I don't know if it was the trust in me'

The early numbers also raise the question of how much of the demand came from Deverakonda's celebrity appeal and how much came from the product proposition.

Deverakonda himself believes several factors may have contributed.

"I don't know if it was the trust in me, the fact that we finally had a product that was no bullshit and only what works, the accessible price point, or the simplicity of a routine that covers the basics of skincare," he said in his exclusive conversation with ET Now Digital.

He also believes the brand is addressing a relatively young consumer.

"Maybe it was also that we were finally building skincare for the young. Most brands speak to aging skin, but we are talking to young skin and telling them to start early and prevent the damage rather than wait for it to happen."

According to Deverakonda, his own approach to skincare changed in his late 20s after recognising the impact of factors such as sun exposure, pollution and the environment.

"I learnt that in my late 20s, and I realised the earlier you start taking care of your skin from the sun, pollution and the environment, the better," he said.

Vijay Deverakonda plans to expand UNHYPE beyond skincare

The actor has indicated that UNHYPE's ambitions extend beyond its first two routines. In the ET Now Digital exclusive, Deverakonda said the company is looking at multiple categories while maintaining its focus on functional products and simple routines.

"One, yes, the idea is to expand into multiple categories. Because UNHYPE is focused on the functional problem solving need of young India and that to keeping it simple for them," he said.

The brand is also working on another skincare routine aimed at barrier protection, particularly for people dealing with dry skin. "We are looking to launch the third routine which is barrier protect more from a dry skin, which really helps for the barrier protection of young skin," Deverakonda said.

He also hinted at another skincare product currently in development, aimed at supporting young consumers dealing with early signs of ageing.

Haircare is another category being considered.

"And then similar kind of a simple routines focused on the problem statements around the hair as well. So, we will be launching hair as another category, probably we will be looking at body also in some time," he said.

Quick commerce and e-commerce expansion planned

UNHYPE's initial strategy has been digital-first, with its own website being the primary platform. However, Deverakonda said the brand plans to expand into quick commerce, e-commerce and marketplaces. "Yes, we would be moving into quick commerce. We would be moving into e-commerce, the marketplaces," he said.

The actor explained that the company deliberately began with its own website because it wanted consumers to understand the three-step routine rather than simply buy individual products.

"The other important point is that and the reason why we also chose to start with our website right now is because we would really like to cultivate the habit of taking care of our skin with a very simple routine," he said.



The idea, he added, is to establish face wash, moisturiser and sunscreen as basic skincare essentials.

"Face wash, moisturizer, sunscreen are like the essentials of human skin right," Deverakonda said.

Individual products could eventually become available for existing customers who need to replenish one part of their routine, while the three-product routine would remain central to the brand's proposition. International expansion is also being considered, with Deverakonda saying the brand has already received interest from Indian consumers living overseas. "We are receiving a lot of requests from international markets, especially the Indians in the United States of America, from other Asian countries, Middle East, etc. So surely that's on the cards," he said.

Offline retail could follow at a later stage, although the actor believes the brand's young target audience makes digital distribution particularly relevant.

The current approach is therefore to build the brand online first, move into quick commerce and larger e-commerce platforms, and eventually explore physical retail.

Vijay Deverakonda's money philosophy

The UNHYPE business comes against the backdrop of Deverakonda's broader approach to money and investing. In the ET Now Digital exclusive, the actor said he remains conscious of prices despite his success and continues to negotiate before making purchases.

"I love making money, I love spending money, I love giving away money. I love investing money. All of it's something that really gives me a dopamine kick. I still look at price tags. I negotiate and then I splurge. Or wait for a discount. But then splurge, yeah," he said.

However, he is particularly clear about his approach to idle cash. "I don't like money sitting idle, so investing is really important," Deverakonda said.

He believes money should be put to work as quickly as possible rather than simply sitting in an account. "Making money is important and immediately as much as possible invest. Because then money is working, money is making money instead of you having to work everyday," he said.

For Deverakonda, entrepreneurship appears to be an extension of the same philosophy. Instead of simply earning from his work in cinema, he is increasingly putting capital, ideas and his own consumer experiences into businesses.

UNHYPE's first two weeks have provided an encouraging start. But the bigger test for the brand will be whether it can turn an initial celebrity-led sell-out into repeat purchases, wider distribution and sustained consumer demand as it moves into new categories. ●



Shaping Chennai's Residential Landscape, One Generation at a Time

For over six decades, Appaswamy Real Estates has built homes with one conviction: that every home should serve its families well for generations to come. Across generations, the brand has held to a simple standard, to be fair in every sense of the word, with financial transparency and loyalty only to its customers.

That integrity is matched by ambition in what the group builds. Every Appaswamy home is designed to elevate the homeowners' lifestyles, with global design, premium materials, and world-class fittings brought together with precision and care.

Just as importantly, Appaswamy has consistently handed over homes on time, often ahead of schedule, without compromising on quality.

At the ETNow Realty Conclave in Chennai, the Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Shri Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, presented the award, received by COO Mr. Gnanaseelan. It honours the many people behind the brand's journey, and a promise to keep building with care and consistency.



Aim has been to bridge the gap between affordability and aspiration: Casagrand

Founded in Chennai in 2003 by Mr Arun Mn, Casagrand began with a 12-apartment residential project and a clear vision to bring greater transparency to real estate, simplify the homebuying experience and make quality homes accessible to a wider section of aspiring homebuyers.

With an early focus on mid-segment housing, Casagrand sought to bridge the gap between affordability and aspiration. Its proposition went beyond the price of a home to deliver greater value through quality construction, generous living spaces, modern lifestyle amenities and thoughtful design. The belief that every square foot should offer meaningful value continues to shape its developments, complemented by customer-centric planning, robust quality standards and a commitment to timely delivery.

Over more than two decades, Casagrand has evolved into a multi-market real estate developer, with a portfolio spanning apartments, villas, high-rise residences and integrated communities. Today, the company has a presence across Chennai, Coimbatore, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune and Dubai, with a portfolio of over 180 projects spanning more than 88 million sq. ft.

This journey of scale, customer trust and value-led development has earned Casagrand the Real Estate Brand of the Decade award at the ET NOW Realty Conclave in Chennai, recognising its evolution and contribution to the real estate sector.



AMĀRA homes: Turning Aspirations into a home

For two decades, AMĀRA homes have shaped Chennai's residential landscape through thoughtful architecture and distinctive craftsmanship. Over 400 families—including distinguished names from Chennai and across the world—form part of that journey.

Founded on Chairman Mr. Amarnath Reddy's vision, the brand is led by Managing Director Mr. Tilak Kapil Chitale, with a clear ambition: to be the first door people knock on when they dream of owning a luxury home in Chennai.

Its portfolio spans commercial, hospitality, and residential developments, including Acropolis on R.K. Salai and Sheraton Grand Resort on ECR. Its residential footprint totals 2 million sq. ft., with flagship project AMĀRA AANYA on St. Mary's Road carrying the journey forward.

Named Ultra Luxury Developer of the Year 2026 at the ET NOW Realty Conclave, Chennai, AMĀRA homes continues to fulfil its purpose—turning aspirations into an address through homes that inspire lasting pride of ownership.



The Homemakers Who Care

Anchored by 37 years of visionary excellence and entrusted by 4,000+ discerning families, Navin's designs landmarks where legacy transcends time and value knows no compromise, so you get the highest value for your investment.

- 130+ Projects
- 1,575+ Quality Checks
- IGBC National Green Building Champion
- Presence in Chennai and Bengaluru

First developer in Chennai to receive ISO 9001:2008 certification. Our upgrade to ISO 9001:2015 for our Quality Management System reinforces our enduring principles, unwavering commitment and pursuit of excellence.

Awards and Recognition

Over the years, Navin's has earned 65+ awards, including several national honours. Among our latest accolades are two prestigious recognitions from ETNow Realty Conclave:

- Real Estate Entrepreneur of the Year 2026
- Excellence in Building Lasting Legacies, Brick by Brick



Designing New Era of Luxury Living in Chennai

For more than five decades, the Ampa Group has remained an integral part of Chennai's business landscape, building a diverse portfolio that spans real estate, retail, hospitality, finance and technology. Guided by third-generation entrepreneur Ampa Palaniappan, Chairman & Managing Director, the Group has consistently contributed to the city's evolving urban fabric, notably with the launch of Ampa Skywalk in 2009, among Chennai's pioneering organised retail destinations.

Today, the Group is embarking on what may be its most defining venture yet: Taj Sky View Hotel & Residences, developed in partnership with IHCL. Positioned as the world's first Taj-branded residences, the project represents a significant milestone in the evolution of luxury living in India.

Spread across 3.5 acres on Nelson Manickam Road, the mixed-use development will bring together a 235-key Taj hotel and 123 branded residences. Residents will have access to the hallmark hospitality associated with the Taj brand, including personalised services, in-residence dining, and privileged access to hotel amenities such as restaurants, wellness facilities and leisure spaces. The development is scheduled for completion by the end of 2027.

The project's ambition and innovation recently received industry recognition at the ET NOW Realty Conclave, Chennai, where the Ampa Group was honoured with the 'Best Branded Residences Real Estate Developer of the Year' award. The recognition reflects the Group's enduring commitment to redefining urban living and shaping a new benchmark for luxury real estate in Chennai.



DAC Developers Charts the Next Phase of Residential Growth

With two decades of experience, DAC Developers has built a reputation for thoughtfully designed homes grounded in quality, integrity and customer trust. Led by Founder and Managing Director Mr. Sathish Kumar Santhanam, the company has completed 5 million sq. ft. of construction, creating homes that balance contemporary design with lasting value.

From its Chennai roots, DAC has expanded its presence to Coimbatore, supported by international marketing offices in Dubai and Singapore. Its portfolio spans apartments, villas and residential communities designed around evolving lifestyles.

Adding to this journey, DAC Developers received the Excellence in Contemporary Housing Development award at the ET Now.in Realty Conclave & Awards 2026 – South Edition in Chennai.

The recognition celebrates the people and principles behind DAC's growth. Looking ahead, DAC aspires to bring its commitment to quality living to more communities across India, guided by its philosophy: Dream. Ascend. Conquer.



A Different Blueprint for Real Estate

For most families, buying land is among the most significant financial decisions they will ever make. It is an investment in security, aspiration and the future. At Adissia Developers, that reality shapes the way the company approaches real estate.

Founded by first-generation entrepreneur M.V. Manikandan, Adissia was built on a belief that trust must precede transactions. From modest beginnings, Manikandan has grown the company by focusing not merely on selling property, but on helping families make confident and informed ownership decisions.

Headquartered in Coimbatore, Adissia has established a presence across Tamil Nadu through DTCP and RERA-approved plotted developments, villas and apartments. Its philosophy places transparency, compliance and customer experience at the centre of every project.

What distinguishes the company is its effort to extend the relationship beyond the point of sale. Through initiatives such as Build Companion and the AdissiaOne App, homebuyers receive ongoing support and access to essential services, reinforcing the company's commitment long after possession.

For Manikandan, entrepreneurship is also a vehicle for broader social impact. Through MK Foundations, he is working to expand access to education, encourage entrepreneurship and promote greater inclusion, reflecting a conviction that business growth and community development should progress together.

Recognition at the ET NOW Realty Conclave in Chennai marks another milestone in Adissia's growth journey. Yet the company remains focused on a larger ambition, with plans for a public listing by 2031 and a vision of building a trusted real estate institution for the long term.

In a sector often measured by land banks and square footage, Adissia's story is ultimately about something more enduring: helping families build a foundation for the future. For the company, every plot represents not just an asset, but the beginning of a family's next chapter. ●



From Ambition to Address: The VRX Living Story

VRX Living has achieved a significant milestone, with VRX 360 receiving the Excellence in Residential Project – Chennai award at the ETNow.in Realty Conclave & Awards 2026 – South Edition.

Featuring contemporary architecture, smart-home features, and thoughtfully planned spaces, VRX 360 reflects the company's focus on modern, comfortable living.

VRX Homes has delivered 986 apartments and commenced handovers for another 722 apartments, with another 820 apartments planned for delivery this year.

The company is accelerating development across key projects, including 1,352 apartments in Thirumazhisai and Porur, alongside 146 villa plots in Oragadam. These locations offer opportunities shaped by infrastructure expansion and urban growth.

Under the leadership of Managing Director Mr. Ashwin Chendilnathan, VRX Living continues to focus on quality homes, innovation, and customer satisfaction. This award reinforces the company's commitment to developing thoughtfully planned residential communities and creating meaningful living experiences as Chennai's housing sector evolves.



Jain Housing's Journey from Trust to Industry Recognition

Sachin Mehta, MD, Jain Housing, talks about the people, partnerships and principles behind the company's latest industry honour.

Jain Housing & Construction Ltd. has been named Economic Times Developer of the Year 2026, Tamil Nadu, marking a significant milestone in its 39-year journey. Founded in 1987, the Chennai-headquartered developer has delivered over 220 projects and more than 15 million sq. ft. of premium residential spaces across South India.

Commenting on the recognition, Managing Director Sachin Mehta said, "This honour, presented by the Honourable Governor, reflects the trust our customers and partners have placed in us and the dedication of our team. Our journey has always been guided by a commitment to quality, integrity and lasting value in every home we build.

This recognition inspires us to uphold that legacy, raise the bar in real estate development, and continue creating thoughtfully designed homes and communities that future generations can be proud of." ●



One Thread, One Vision: Zenvistas Realty

Coimbatore's textile industry has always understood that strength comes from many threads woven together. Zenvistas Realty is that idea, applied to real estate — a venture bringing together 17 established textile manufacturing companies from the western districts of Tamil Nadu, with over two decades of industry experience and a combined annual turnover exceeding 1 billion.

Leading the collective as Managing Partner is Mr. Satheesh Kumar, who brings the manufacturing discipline of precision, patience and uncompromising quality to how communities are planned and delivered.

Zenvistas' first expression of this vision is Zenora, a premium villa community at Goldwins, Coimbatore. Just 60 villas share the enclave, with half the land kept as open space around a 21,000 sq. ft. clubhouse and the signature Tree of Life gardens — away from the rush, yet minutes from the airport, schools and hospitals.

Within months of launch, 30 families have already chosen Zenora. For Zenvistas, that trust is the first weave of a longer story.



₹9,000 crore in assets under development, partnership with Taj Residences build scale for Bharathi Meraki

Bharathi Meraki has grown through strategic partnerships, development expertise and a commitment to creating lasting real estate value. Working with landowners, developers and investors, the brand brings together capabilities in design, development management and marketing.

As marketing partner for Taj Residences in Chennai, Bharathi Meraki strengthens its presence in the luxury residential segment. Its wider portfolio spans luxury residences, hospitality and integrated mixed-use developments.

The Bharathi group has approximately ₹9,000 crore in assets under development, including around ₹4,000 crore in branded residences and hospitality. This scale reflects its expanding presence and focus on projects that combine design excellence with investor value.

Recognition in the Ultra Luxury Branded Residence category at the ET NOW Realty Conclave, Chennai, marks another milestone in Bharathi Meraki's growth journey, reinforcing its focus on distinctive residential experiences and value creation.



MP Developers Recognised for Trusted Homes and Assured Value Creation

Chennai-based MP Developers was honoured with the "Excellence in Trusted Homes & Assured Value Creation" award at the ET NOW Realty Conclave & Awards – South Edition 2026 in Chennai. The recognition was received from the Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu.

With a 14-year legacy, MP Developers has delivered over 250 projects, serving more than 3,000 families. Its portfolio includes over 10 ongoing projects across Chennai and Coimbatore, with more than 1.5 million sq. ft. under active development.

Led by Founder and Managing Director Praveen Malinani, the company focuses on delivering quality homes that combine everyday comfort, accessibility and long-term value. Its residential portfolio spans apartments, community developments and plotted projects.

The award marks a milestone in the company's journey as it continues to expand its presence in Tamil Nadu, guided by its brand promise, "Trust Forever."



Propshell's next steps: Aim to sell an additional 10 million sq. ft. of plotted land by 2029

Propshell has been honoured with the prestigious 'Plotted Developer of the Year 2026' award at the ET NOW.in Realty Conclave & Awards 2026 – South Edition, held at Taj Coromandel, Chennai. The award was presented by the Honourable Governor of Tamil Nadu, Shri Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, recognising the company's contribution to the plotted real estate segment.

Founded in 2007 by G. Jayaram, Propshell has established a strong presence through over 80 projects, serving more than 10,000 customers and selling 12 million sq. ft. of land across Chennai, Trichy, Coimbatore, Kodaikanal and Dubai.

Commenting on the achievement, Founder G. Jayaram said the recognition reinforces the company's commitment to customer trust, responsible development and expanding land ownership opportunities. Building on its journey, Propshell aims to sell an additional 10 million sq. ft. of plotted land by 2029, creating greater opportunities for families to own land and realise their dream homes.



Legendary Builders Bets on 'Value-Led Luxury' as Chennai's Premium Housing Market Evolves

As homebuyers become increasingly discerning about where and how they invest, luxury in residential real estate is undergoing a shift. The focus is moving beyond lavish amenities and grand marketing narratives toward projects that combine location, design quality and long-term value. Chennai-based Legendary Builders is positioning itself at the centre of this transition.

The developer has built its portfolio around what it describes as a philosophy of "value-led luxury", where premium living is defined not merely by exclusivity but by the quality of everyday experiences. From site selection and architectural planning to interior specifications and community design, the company's projects are aimed at delivering homes that justify their premium pricing through functionality, liveability and enduring appeal.

This approach is reflected across its developments, including Legendary Pride, Marvel, Bliss, Moon and Adonia, spread across some of Chennai's sought-after residential micro-markets. Rather than focusing on excess, the company has emphasised spacious layouts, considered design and strong location fundamentals as key differentiators. The strategy comes at a time when premium housing demand continues to gain traction, driven by buyers seeking long-term lifestyle and investment value. Industry observers note that consumers are increasingly evaluating projects on factors such as connectivity, neighbourhood quality, construction standards and future appreciation potential.

Adding to the company's momentum, Founder and Managing Director Syed G Kudhupudin was recently recognised with the "Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year 2026 – Real Estate" award at the ETNow Realty Conclave in Chennai. The recognition highlights the company's growing visibility in the regional real estate sector and reflects its efforts to carve out a distinct identity in the premium housing segment.

For Legendary Builders, the focus remains on creating residences where location, design and quality come together to offer lasting value, an approach that aligns with the evolving expectations of today's homebuyers and the broader transformation underway in India's luxury housing market. ●



Quality construction and customer trust are key: Royal Land & Developers

With two decades of trust, quality and innovation, Royal Land & Developers (RLD) continues to shape Chennai's real estate landscape with thoughtfully designed homes and a commitment to excellence.

Marking a significant milestone in its journey, RLD ALTIMA, Kelambakkam, was honoured at the prestigious ET NOW Realty Conclave 2026, Chennai, with the award for "Excellence in Skyline Development & Architectural Innovation," presented by the Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Thiru. Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar.

This recognition celebrates RLD's vision of redefining urban living through architectural excellence, intelligent design and aspirational lifestyles. Strategically located near OMR, RLD ALTIMA brings together spacious 2 & 3 BHK residences, 117 lifestyle amenities, 70% open spaces and breathtaking skyline views in an elevated residential community.

Built on a legacy of transparency, quality construction and customer trust, RLD continues to transform aspirations into enduring addresses ●



Elements Senior Living Eyes Growth as Demand for Senior Housing Rises

Founded in 2021, Elements Senior Living brings together expertise in senior care, development management and construction to create communities where seniors enjoy independence, comfort and meaningful connections.

The brand has expanded across active, urban and luxury senior living, with a portfolio spanning Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Its communities include Vandalur, Valasaravakkam and Porur in Chennai, alongside projects in Mysuru and upcoming communities in Hosur and Coimbatore.

Elements combines senior-friendly homes with thoughtfully planned services, including nutritious dining, housekeeping, security, healthcare support and wellness programmes. Social activities and shared spaces encourage residents to pursue their interests and build lasting friendships.

Rooted in care, comfort and dignity, Elements continues to grow around the evolving needs of seniors and their families. Its recent recognition at the ET NOW Realty Conclave as Excellence in Senior Living Development marks another milestone in this journey.



From Looms to Land: The Sri Baby Story

In Coimbatore, where the textile industry has long set the standard for precision, Mr. Satheesh Kumar built his first business on exactly that discipline. Founded in 2006, Sri Baby Textiles grew on the strength of long-term supplier relationships and an uncompromising focus on quality.

That discipline travelled. In 2015, the group entered organic farming, learning to think in seasons rather than quarters. In 2020, it expanded into solar and wind energy across Tamil Nadu.

In 2022, these threads converged into Sri Baby Properties. Under Mr. Satheesh Kumar's leadership as Founder and Managing Director, the developer has delivered sold-out plotted communities Albatross and Blue Jay — DTCP and RERA approved, with solar street lighting and rainwater harvesting engineered in from the master plan. Next in line are Cardinal Villa Residences, Dove, Eider and Falcon.

"In textiles, a single loose thread can unravel an entire fabric," he says. "In real estate, a single broken promise can unravel a lifetime of trust." ●



From Homes to Senior Living, Stepsstone Promoters' Diverse Vision

With over 23 years of experience, Stepsstone Promoters Pvt. Ltd. has established a strong presence across 4+ popular cities, delivering 105+ projects and creating 5,700+ happy families.

Our diverse portfolio spans senior living, residential apartments, construction and premium plotted developments, backed by a commitment to quality and customer satisfaction.

Ongoing projects include Vivaa at Nolambur, Viraam at Kattupakkam, Secret Auraa at Kovalam, Plotted developments at Thiruvidanthai and Sunguvarchatram, and our senior living community at Pollachi, Coimbatore.

Recognised with numerous industry awards, Stepsstone continues to build a reputation for excellence, innovation and customer trust. The brand's recognition at the ETNow Realty Conclave, Chennai, marks another milestone in our journey of shaping vibrant communities and creating lasting value for homeowners and investors.



ONGC's Legacy in Tamil Nadu

Since 1956, ONGC has been an enduring pillar of India's energy security, fuelling the nation's aspirations through decades of exploration, innovation and excellence. As India's largest crude oil and natural gas exploration and production company, this Maharatna contributes nearly 70% of the country's domestic production.

In Tamil Nadu, ONGC's Cauvery Asset embodies this legacy, where the pursuit of energy security goes hand in hand with a deep commitment to community well-being. Its dedicated Energy Soldiers work tirelessly to sustain the nation's energy needs while fostering meaningful change in the lives of those around them.

From strengthening education and healthcare to nurturing early childhood development through Anganwadis, ONGC's initiatives reflect a philosophy of progress that reaches beyond energy.

As Energy Partner of the ET Now Realty Conclave & Awards 2026, Chennai, ONGC reaffirmed its commitment to Tamil Nadu's evolving growth story.

For ONGC, the true measure of progress lies not merely in the energy produced, but in the lives enriched and the possibilities created. ●





International design influences help build luxury homes: Cedar Home Store

Founded by architects Ar. Shameem Ahmed and Ar. Mohammed Hisham, Cedar Home Store brings together architectural expertise, creative vision, and a passion for exceptional interiors.

Recognised as the best furniture store in Kerala, Cedar offers a curated collection of premium furniture, bespoke creations, and sophisticated home décor. Inspired by global design trends, the brand combines timeless elegance, contemporary aesthetics, and functional craftsmanship to create distinctive living spaces.

With a commitment to individuality and quality, Cedar brings international design influences closer to Indian homes. Its carefully selected collections and collaborations with distinguished global brands make it a destination for discerning homeowners and design enthusiasts seeking the best Italian furniture showroom experience.

Cedar Home Store received the Excellence in Luxury Furniture & Home Décor honour at the ET Realty Conclave & Awards 2026 – South Edition in Chennai. This recognition celebrates the brand's dedication to design excellence, craftsmanship, and creating exceptional interior living experiences ●



We want to make luxury accessible for homeowners, architects and designers: EIC

Since 1991, East India Company (EIC), founded by Mr. Zahir, has been one of Chennai's most trusted names in sanitaryware, bathroom fittings and building products. *What began as a modest 200 sq ft store in Parrys has grown into showrooms at High Court and Vadapalani, supported by dedicated warehouses.* EIC has served more than 1 million customers and holds Jaquar's Champion of Champions dealer status for Tamil Nadu. Building on this legacy, EIC launched Ceramic Story at Egmore. This 8,500 sq ft premium tile and surface experience centre showcases more than 10,000 designs, including exclusive collections not available elsewhere in Tamil Nadu. Guided by the philosophy "Design Your Story", it makes luxury accessible for homeowners, architects and designers. The group was recently honoured at the ET NOW Realty Conclave & Awards, Chennai, with the award presented by the Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu. The recognition celebrates 35 years of trust and a bold new chapter in design-led living.



GTB Developers: Building for Generations

GTB Developers has been named Emerging Developer of the Year at the ETNow Realty Conclave, Chennai, in recognition of its growth and a strong pipeline of upcoming launches.

GTB Developers brings together two established names: the GT Group, a Chennai enterprise founded in 1967 spanning education, real estate, trade and manufacturing, and Bharathi Homes, a developer known for product expertise since 2011. The partnership is product- and design-centric, guided by a simple conviction: we care how you live.

Its signature development, Republic of Nature, is a 32-acre community on East Coast Road, planned around open landscape, privacy and the rhythm of coastal living.

With its next phase set to launch soon, GTB Developers is focused on building communities and landmarks that hold value across generations.

"This recognition belongs to every family that placed its trust in us early," said Bharat Kanti Doshi, Chairman, GTB Developers.

GTB Developers is a brand of GT Bharathi Urban Developers Pvt Ltd. | www.gtb.in



From Metro Corridors to Public Parks: The Multidisciplinary Approach of Linetouch Design

Linetouch Design is a multidisciplinary studio specialising in building architecture, interior design and landscape architecture. Drawing on over two decades of professional experience and a landscape portfolio spanning approximately 1,600 acres, the studio connects buildings, interiors and outdoor environments through an integrated approach.

With a focus on thoughtful planning, contemporary aesthetics, and practical execution, the firm creates spaces that respond to the needs of people and their surroundings. Its work spans homes, institutional campuses, industrial developments and public parks, balancing beauty, functionality and sustainability.

Selected projects include TIDEL Park, Pattabiram; Thiru Vi Ka Park; CMRL Poonamallee Depot; and TICEL Bio Parks. At CMRL Porur Metro Station, landscape development and environmental awareness artwork combine urban greenery with public education.

LINETOUCH DESIGN received the "Excellence in Architecture & Landscape Design" award at the ETNow Realty Conclave, Chennai, on 15 October 2026, marking a milestone in its pursuit of purposeful design.



RoofandFloor.com on how it is bringing hyperlocal intelligence to Real Estate Discovery

Backed by IBI Media's technology expertise, RoofandFloor.com is building a more informed, accessible and technology-driven property discovery experience.

India's real estate market is undergoing a transformation. As infrastructure expands, residential corridors emerge and homebuyers become increasingly research-driven, the way people discover and evaluate properties is changing.

Today's homebuyer looks beyond price, location and square footage. Connectivity, neighbourhood development, lifestyle infrastructure, future growth potential and developer credibility are all important considerations.

In this evolving environment, digital real estate platforms have a larger role to play—not merely as listing destinations, but as sources of information, market intelligence and meaningful connections.

RoofandFloor.com is positioning itself at the intersection of these changing expectations.

A Trusted Brand Enters a New Chapter

Originally developed under The Hindu Group, RoofandFloor.com established its presence as a digital property discovery platform. Its subsequent acquisition by the Chennaiproperties.com group marked a new chapter in the brand's evolution.

The acquisition brought together two complementary strengths: Roofandfloor.com's established brand identity and Chennaiproperties.com's deep understanding of regional real estate markets.

Since its launch in 2014, Chennaiproperties.com has built developer relationships, developed neighbourhood-level market knowledge and helped property seekers navigate their choices.

Together, the platforms aim to serve both sides of the real estate ecosystem—homebuyers seeking relevant information and developers looking to connect with interested audiences.

Mr. Ilavarasan P, Founder & CEO, IBI Media, said:

"We are excited to lead RoofandFloor.com into its next phase of growth, powered by advanced technology, a renewed vision, and our proven go-to-market expertise. This strategic move strengthens our national presence while preserving our deep understanding of local markets. Our focus is to build a trusted, technology-driven real estate platform that delivers a smarter, simpler, and more seamless experience for homebuyers and developers across India." ●



Three pillar of growth - professional networking platform, Krignal TV and curated networking events

Connecting People. Creating Opportunities. Inspiring Growth.

In a world where connections are abundant but meaningful opportunities remain limited, Krignal is redefining the way professionals connect, collaborate and grow.

Built on the belief that the right connections can create extraordinary possibilities, Krignal brings together technology, storytelling and real-world networking through one integrated ecosystem.

At its core are three interconnected verticals: Krignal's professional networking platform, Krignal TV and curated networking events.

While the technology platform enables purposeful professional discovery and connections, Krignal TV amplifies inspiring journeys, entrepreneurial insights and meaningful conversations. Its networking events bring professionals, entrepreneurs and industry leaders together, turning introductions into relationships and relationships into opportunities.

Unlike conventional networking platforms, Krignal bridges digital interactions with authentic human connections, creating value beyond visibility.

Its association as the Official Networking Partner at the ET NOW Realty Conclave & Awards 2026, Chennai, reinforces this vision.

More than networking, Krignal is building a future where every connection has the potential to create something extraordinary. ●



Beyond the Skyline: *Building the Next Era of Indian Real Estate*

By **Aishwarya Bansal** | Co-Founder, Smartworld Developers

India's changing skyline reflects the ambition of a country on the move. Yet the real measure of progress is not the height of our buildings or the scale of our launches. It is the quality of life we create, the commitments we honour and the trust we earn over time.

For those of us shaping the next chapter of Indian real estate, the opportunity is significant. Homebuyers are more informed, internationally exposed, and clear about what they expect. They want spaces that are not only beautiful, but also intuitive to live in, thoughtfully planned, and built to last. Meeting those expectations calls for a different kind of leadership: one that connects imagination with business rigour.

A Broader Lens on Business

My approach has been shaped by an unusual combination of influences. Training in gemmology and jewellery design taught me to appreciate proportion, craftsmanship, and detail. Studying finance taught me to consider feasibility, priorities, and the long-term consequences of decisions. I have come to see these perspectives as inseparable. An inspiring idea matters only when it can be executed well and add genuine value.

Travel has widened that lens. In a thoughtfully designed hotel, a welcoming courtyard or a neighbourhood that encourages people to walk, I look beyond appearances to understand why a place works. The challenge is to translate those observations into Indian homes, respecting our climate, lifestyle and the different generations that often share a household.

At Smartworld Developers, that perspective informs how I think about the customer experience, from the first visit to an experience gallery to the everyday life a home should support. Design is most powerful when it makes something easier, calmer or more meaningful.

From Vision to Delivery

Real estate has no shortage of bold ideas. The greater test is turning them into consistent experiences. A well-considered floor plan can matter more than another headline feature. Materials must stand up to daily use. Shared spaces need to remain welcoming and manageable long after residents move in.

These outcomes depend on choices made across teams, not on one individual's vision. Design, construction, customer service and maintenance must be aligned around a common standard.

> **Good leadership is not about having every answer. It is about bringing together capable people, giving them clarity, and trusting them to do meaningful work.**

As a business grows, maintaining that consistency becomes both harder and more important.

The same principle applies to responsible development. Natural light, efficient layouts, durable finishes and landscapes suited to long-term care are not decorative additions. They influence comfort, resource use and the value a home offers over its lifetime.

The People Behind Progress

A stronger tomorrow also depends on the culture we build within organisations. I want people to feel confident sharing a different viewpoint, questioning an assumption or taking ownership of an idea. Good leadership is not about having every answer. It is about bringing together capable people, giving them clarity and trusting them to do meaningful work.

India's next generation of professionals brings fresh expectations and new ways of thinking. Creating room for that talent is essential if our businesses are to remain relevant and resilient.

Looking Ahead

India has the opportunity to set a distinct benchmark for residential development—one informed by global standards but grounded in how Indians actually live. Achieving it will require patience, thoughtful decisions and a willingness to measure success beyond immediate numbers.

Buildings shape a skyline. What matters more is the confidence they inspire, the communities they nurture and the lives they make possible. ●



Dr. Neha Berlia: *Shaping the Future Through Education and Leadership*

Bridging institutional legacy with progressive thinking, Dr. Neha Berlia champions the role of education in nurturing future-ready individuals and contributing to India's growth.

In an era of rapid technological advancement and evolving industry demands, education extends beyond academic achievement to encompass innovation, critical thinking, and holistic development. At the intersection of education and leadership is Dr. Neha Berlia - Co-Promoter and Director (Family Business Board), Apeejay Stya & Svran Groups, and Pro-Chancellor of Apeejay Stya University, who is associated with the Apeejay Stya & Svran Group's longstanding commitment to institution-building.

With an academic background that includes Stanford University and the University of St. Gallen, Dr. Berlia brings a multidisciplinary perspective to leadership, reflecting the importance of connecting global outlook with India's evolving educational landscape.

Balancing Legacy with Innovation

Building enduring educational institutions requires preserving foundational values while embracing new approaches to learning. As industries transform and new career opportunities emerge, institutions must equip students with not only subject knowledge but also adaptability, creativity, ethical reasoning, and problem-solving skills.

This approach is particularly significant for India, where education plays a crucial role in unlocking demographic potential, strengthening workforce capabilities, and encouraging entrepreneurship. Future-ready institutions must prepare students to navigate uncertainty while contributing meaningfully to society.

Education as a Catalyst for Nation-Building

The impact of education extends beyond classrooms, shaping individuals, communities and the nation's economic future. Strong educational ecosystems create opportunities for personal growth, social mobility and innovation.

As India moves towards a knowledge-driven economy, leadership in the education industry will increasingly depend on the ability to combine academic excellence with real-world relevance. Through her association with the Apeejay educational ecosystem, Dr. Berlia is part of this larger conversation on institutional development and the future of learning.

Ultimately, the enduring value of education lies in its ability to empower individuals, inspire progress, and build a stronger future for generations to come. ●



Siddhant Sharda: *The Director Who Builds People Before Buildings*

The director is building Sharda Uptown on customer trust, a happy workplace, and a legacy designed to last.

Some leaders measure success in square feet. Others measure it in how people feel. Few can build a name that customers trust, an organisation people are proud to work for, and a legacy that outlasts its balance sheet. Siddhant Sharda, Director of Sharda Uptown, is doing all three at once.

Siddhant Sharda has carried the family's legacy forward with one clear idea: growth means little unless it is built on trust. In a remarkably short span, he has led Sharda Uptown to a series of landmark mixed-use projects that have strengthened the group's reputation in NCR.

That reputation rests on a customer-first approach. Every decision, Siddhant Sharda says, begins with one question- what does the customer need? That means clear communication at every stage, honest timelines, and a team that stays accessible long after the project is handed over. For most customers, a place to live, work, or invest is among the biggest commitments they will make, and he insists it be treated that way.

None of this came from shortcuts. It came from discipline, careful strategy, and a habit of listening before deciding, to customers as much as to his own team. The result, he believes, is simple when people feel heard, they stay, they grow, and they recommend.

Inside the company, the focus is equally clear - build a place where people are happy to work. Colleagues describe a leader who is approachable yet exacting, one who sets high standards, then gives his teams the room, respect, and support to meet them. Open conversations, fair opportunities, and a culture where good work is noticed are, in his view, the real foundations of a company.

His belief is straightforward: happy employees create happy customers. By treating his team as partners rather than resources, Siddhant Sharda has built a workplace marked by trust, ownership, and a sense of belonging, which keeps the quality of service high at every touchpoint.

"Every space we build is a promise we keep. That promise is only as strong as the people who keep it, which is why I want every customer to feel heard and every colleague to feel they belong," says Siddhant Sharda. ●





When Friends Become Family: *Reimagining Diwali Gifting with young India*

Diwali gifting in India has long centred around family: relatives, neighbours and the close circle that turns up every year with sweets in hand. But for a generation that has moved cities, started careers, and built lives away from home, the list of people worth celebrating looks different now. California Almonds' new Diwali campaign, 'Badam for EveryBuddy', picks up on exactly that shift.

The premise is simple. The tradition of gifting almonds at Diwali doesn't have to stop at family. It can extend to the friends, colleagues, flatmates, and everyday companions who have quietly become central to people's lives.

A Cast Most Viewers Will Recognise

The campaign unfolds as a musical film, and its strength lies in how familiar its characters feel. There's the friend who inevitably ends up running away from the celebrations. There's the companion who is up for any plan, however last-minute. And there's the 'cool aunty', who walks in with her own energy and lifts the room. These aren't exaggerated ad-world personalities. They're people most viewers will instantly place in their own lives, and that recognition does much of the film's work. Rather than selling a new version of Diwali, it reflects how many people already celebrate, with belonging built as much on shared experiences as on shared family ties.

Extending a Tradition, Not Replacing It

Anyone who has spent a festival away from home will recognise the dynamic. Colleagues become a daily support system. Flatmates become family by default. Friendships take on roles that relatives once filled. What sets the campaign apart is its restraint. It doesn't attempt to invent a new gifting ritual. It takes a familiar one, almonds as a festive gift, and simply widens



its reach. That approach feels more grounded than much festive advertising, which tends either to lean heavily on nostalgia or to discard tradition altogether.

Almonds have held a place in Indian festive gifting for generations, thanks to their cultural familiarity and nutritional value. The campaign builds on that existing association while steering it toward younger consumers whose social lives look markedly different from their parents'. Mani Pandher, India Market Lead at the Almond Board of California, has described the campaign as a way to connect with younger audiences through contemporary cultural cues and evolving relationships, while encouraging almonds to become part of everyday routines beyond the festive season.

Haldiram's Brings Almonds into Mithai

The campaign also extends to the gift box itself. California Almonds has partnered with Haldiram's on a limited-edition Diwali hamper featuring three almond-based sweets: Badam Kesar Katli, Badam Rose Ladoo and Badam Biscoff Burfi. The selection captures the campaign's spirit well. Katli and ladoo are as traditional as mithai gets, while Biscoff burfi brings a distinctly contemporary twist into the same box. The hamper is available at three Haldiram's outlets in Delhi (NSP Pacific Mall in Pitampura, Chandni Chowk, and Moti Nagar) from October 20 to November 20, 2026. The collaboration is a reminder of how much meaning food carries in gifting. What goes in the box often signals thoughtfulness as much as it marks the occasion.

The Bigger Challenge: Life After Diwali

For the almond category, the larger task lies beyond the festive season. Diwali remains a key gifting moment, but the longer-term opportunity is to secure a place for almonds in everyday diets, particularly among younger consumers who may not think of them outside a gift box. That is a harder story to tell. It requires talking about nutrition and daily habits without losing the cultural warmth that makes almonds familiar in the first place.

A Festive List That Says Something

Ultimately, 'Badam for EveryBuddy' is about more than expanding a gift list. It recognises that festive gifting is a quiet record of who matters, and for many young Indians, that record now includes the friend who organises everything, the colleague who has their back, and the aunty who isn't technically an aunty at all. The campaign's underlying message is that traditions don't need to stay frozen to stay meaningful. Sometimes they simply need to make room for the people who have become family along the way. ●



If You Ask for Water, *You Don't Need a Presentation on Water*

You just want water.It sounds obvious. Yet businesses often spend hours making presentations, preparing reports and running campaigns, only to find that the people they need to reach still don't understand what they do or why it matters. ***This is the problem Signal & Gravity wants to solve.***

Curated by Diya & Vivek, the firm helps businesses make their ideas easier to understand and their work easier to recognise. Its starting point is simple: being visible is not enough. People need to understand what they are seeing, why it matters and what makes it worth their attention. The founders bring different experiences to this challenge. Vivek has worked across Goldman Sachs, Teach For India and two Antarctic expeditions, experiences that exposed him to very different systems and ways of thinking. Diya built her own independent practice at 26 and has collaborated with institutions including National Geographic. Her work focuses on making complex ideas clearer and



more useful. ***Their approach also reflects a change in how an agency can work.***

Artificial intelligence is making research, analysis and content production faster. Work that once required several stages and handovers can now move with fewer delays. A small team can explore more ideas, examine different perspectives and take a concept closer to execution without building a large process around it. But producing more is not the same as getting it right. AI can generate options; it cannot, on its own, determine what a business should stand for, what its audience needs to hear or which ideas deserve to be pursued. That still requires context, judgment and an understanding of people. At Signal & Gravity, AI extends what the team can do, while human judgment guides what it does. Whether the task is making a brand stand apart, improving how a website communicates or helping a business reach the right people through the media, the focus is on finding the real problem before producing more work. The idea is particularly relevant in a world where content is easier to create than ever, but attention remains limited. When everyone can publish more, the ability to make something clear, meaningful and worth remembering becomes more important.

Signal & Gravity is built around that belief: not to make businesses louder, but to help them communicate with greater clarity and purpose.

Because sometimes, the problem isn't that people haven't heard your story. It's that they still don't understand it. ●

Dr. Rakesh Gupta: *Advancing Specialised Cataract Surgery Through Precision and Compassion*

Founder and Chairman, Shreya Eye Centre | TEDx Speaker | Exceptional Ambidextrous Eye Surgeon

With over 25 years of experience, Dr. Rakesh Gupta has dedicated his career to advancing specialised eye care through surgical precision, technological innovation and compassionate, patient-first care.

An alumnus of University College of Medical Sciences, Delhi University, Dr. Gupta earned a gold medal in postgraduate ophthalmology from Maulana Azad Medical College and Guru Nanak Eye Centre. He pursued specialised training in comprehensive ophthalmology, cornea and refractive surgery at L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad, and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Glasgow, UK.



Dr. Gupta is an exceptional ambidextrous eye surgeon, distinguished by his ability to perform surgical procedures using both hands. This remarkable skill reflects his coordination, adaptability and commitment to precision in ophthalmology. As a TEDx speaker, he also shares insights on healthcare, innovation and the evolving landscape of specialised cataract surgery. Under his leadership, Shreya Eye Centre has established its presence across Delhi, Noida and Indirapuram, providing specialised services in cataract surgery, corneal disorders, refractive procedures and glaucoma management. Beyond clinical practice, Dr. Gupta remains committed to research, professional knowledge-sharing and the training of fellow ophthalmologists. His approach combines advanced medical technology with personalised attention, helping patients make informed decisions about their vision and treatment.

His professional journey exemplifies the importance of clinical excellence, continuous learning, and trust in healthcare. Through Shreya Eye Centre, Dr. Gupta continues to champion accessible, advanced and compassionate eye care, bringing together surgical expertise and innovation to help protect and improve one of our most valuable senses: vision. ●

Dr Kshitiz Murdia

Medicine in Mind, Technology in Hand, Patient Trust at Heart



Dr Kshitiz Murdia, Whole-Time Director and CEO of Indira IVF, brings together hands-on experience in IVF with the leadership of a nationwide, single-specialty IVF network.

As CEO and Whole-Time Director, Dr Murdia has helped guide Indira IVF's growth from a single clinic in Rajasthan to a network of over 200 centres across India, with a growing international presence. Over this period, his focus has been on building the teams, protocols and processes that allow a large network to function consistently, with safety and patient-centred care at the core.

Dr Murdia has consistently pointed to technology and standardised procedures as the foundation of quality in fertility care. Under his leadership, Indira IVF has adopted tools such as electronic witnessing systems, which track information and samples at all stages, ensuring traceability and security. For patients, this adds a layer of confidence in the treatment process. He believes the progress of fertility care in India will depend on clinical expertise and technology advancing together, with patient trust as the true measure of that progress.

Beyond his role at Indira IVF, he has advocated for infertility to be viewed as a public health concern, not only a medical one. He has spoken about the need for greater awareness and equitable access, so that location, information gaps or stigma do not prevent people from seeking fertility care.

For Dr Murdia, the goal remains simple: that every person seeking to build a family can receive fertility care that is accessible, reliable and grounded in science. ●





Dr. Payal Bansal Kanodia: *Reimagining Philanthropy as an Engine of Social Transformation*

Seven years of M3M Foundation—and a vision that places people, purpose, and progress at the heart of nation building

"The true measure of leadership lies not merely in the wealth it creates, but in the human possibilities it unlocks".
— Dr. Payal Bansal Kanodia

For Dr. Payal Bansal Kanodia, Chairperson and Trustee of M3M Foundation, philanthropy is not an adjunct to enterprise; it is a purposeful instrument of social transformation, one that seeks to convert vulnerability into opportunity, aspiration into agency, and giving into enduring change. When M3M Foundation was established on 16 October 2019, its founding conviction was rooted in a reality often obscured by India's spectacular urban growth. The migrant workers who helped build its cities, and the families who journeyed alongside them, frequently remained on the margins of education, healthcare, and social protection. What began with an acknowledgement of these unmet needs evolved into a broader commitment: To create pathways through which underserved communities could realise their potential with dignity. Seven years on, that commitment has grown into an expansive development ecosystem spanning 21 states, 4 Union Territories, 90 districts, and 1,349 villages, with more than 49 lakh lives impacted. Yet, the significance of this journey lies not simply in its geographical reach, but also in its philosophy of integrated development.

Under Dr. Kanodia's leadership, M3M Foundation has pursued a model that recognises the interdependence of human progress. Education must lead to opportunity; Healthcare must underpin well-being; Skilling must translate into livelihoods; and Environmental Conservation must protect the resources upon which communities depend. From iMpower's safe learning spaces for vulnerable children to Kaushal Sambal's employment and entrepreneurship initiatives, from Lakshya's support for aspiring athletes to Sankalp and VanJeevan's environmental interventions, the Foundation's work seeks to address not merely immediate needs, but the structural barriers that perpetuate disadvantage. This is what distinguishes the social business leader from the traditional benefactor: An understanding that philanthropy must create capability, not dependency; sustainable outcomes, not merely impressive interventions. Through Mashaal, the Foundation also supports grassroots innovators and social enterprises, recognising that solutions to India's complex challenges must be nurtured, strengthened and scaled through collaboration.

On 14 October, Abhyuday brought together the Foundation's partners from across India in a celebration of this collective journey. More than a commemorative occasion, the gathering represented the shared enterprise of organisations and individuals working towards a common social purpose. Its significance lay in acknowledging that transformative change is rarely the achievement of one institution alone; it is the cumulative consequence of partnerships, perseverance, and a common belief in human potential.

For Dr. Kanodia, this collaborative ethos is central to the future of philanthropy. The ambition is not simply to extend the Foundation's footprint, but to deepen its impact to foster communities capable of sustaining their own progress and individuals empowered to become architects of their own futures. As India advances towards the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, such institution-building assumes particular significance. A developed nation must be judged not only by its economic achievements, but by the opportunities it creates for its children, the dignity it affords its workers, the independence it enables for its women, and the resilience it cultivates in its villages.

Ultimately, Dr. Payal Bansal Kanodia's leadership reflects an expansive conception of social responsibility: that enterprise and empathy need not occupy separate worlds, and that the most consequential form of giving is one that multiplies opportunity long after the initial intervention.

The enduring promise of M3M Foundation is therefore not simply to change lives, but to strengthen people's capacity to change their own and, in doing so, contribute to the transformation of India itself. ●



From Marketing Strategy to *Lasting Value*

Sangeeta Tiwari | Head of Marketing, Ashtech Group

Sangeeta Tiwari is a marketing and brand-building professional with an MBA in Marketing and experience across leading organisations, including Hero Group and Era Infra Engineering. Currently, as Head of Marketing at Ashtech Group, she leads marketing, branding, and strategic communication initiatives, driving the Group's brand evolution and strengthening its presence in the real estate sector.

With a vision to build enduring brands, Sangeeta believes that effective marketing goes beyond visibility—it is about creating trust, meaningful connections, and long-term value. Her approach combines strategic thinking, creativity, and consumer insight to build brands that resonate with audiences and stand out in a competitive marketplace.

She is passionate about bringing fresh perspectives to traditional industries, empowering teams, and creating marketing strategies that align business ambition with customer aspirations. For Sangeeta, leadership means embracing change, inspiring people, and building brands that are prepared for the future. ●

Redefining Luxury Homes

Umesh Kumar



Umesh Kumar, Founder and CEO, Interia, is changing how India's luxury homes are designed, built, and delivered.

For many of India's affluent homeowners, building a luxury home has meant managing a crowd: architects, designers, contractors, carpenters, and a string of vendors, each answerable only for their own part. Delays, cost overruns, and uneven finishes are often accepted as the price of ambition. Umesh Kumar, Founder and CEO of UK Interia Pvt. Ltd. (Interia), has spent close to two decades proving that it need not be so.



Umesh Kumar receives ET NOW's "Excellence in Luxury Homes" award for Interia's Malibu Towne residence, 2025.

His own path explains why. A civil engineer from IIT Delhi, Kumar's passion for design goes back to his engineering days, when he designed and built rocking chairs inspired by Scandinavian furniture. An MBA and a leadership career in media, as Associate Publisher at India Today and, from 2007, CEO and Publisher of Open Media Network, taught him to bring structure to complex undertakings. The turning point came while doing up his own apartment: no single company would take accountability for all of it. So he took charge of the entire project himself. The result delighted his family and friends, and Kumar realised what was missing in the market: one partner accountable for the whole home.

Interia, founded in 2009, was built to fill it, bringing design, project management, and custom furniture manufacturing under one roof. Its 30,000 sq. ft. facility in Manesar crafts bespoke furniture in-house, giving clients one point of accountability from first brief to final handover. The promise: "Beautiful homes. Minus the drama."

That approach has drawn recognition. In 2025, ET NOW conferred its "Excellence in Luxury Homes" award on Interia's Malibu Towne residence, a standard the firm delivers across its luxury portfolio.

For Kumar, good design should improve daily life while expressing each client's individuality. By setting new benchmarks for quality, craftsmanship, and reliability, he is helping professionalise India's luxury residential industry. ●



Where Learning Meets Industry: *Gaurav Kapoor's Vision for a Career-Ready India*

Gaurav Kapoor | Founder and Managing Director, Etrain Education Pvt. Ltd.

As technology transforms the workplace, Gaurav Kapoor is focused on bridging the gap between education and employability through industry-aligned learning and recognised professional certifications.

A degree opens doors, but practical skills often determine how far individuals progress. As industries evolve and technology reshapes professional roles, connecting academic knowledge with workplace requirements has become a critical priority for India's education and skills-development ecosystem.

This is the space in which Gaurav Kapoor has built EtrainIndia, with a focus on bringing industry-aligned learning and professional certification opportunities closer to students and aspiring professionals. His work reflects a larger ambition: helping learners develop capabilities that extend beyond theoretical knowledge and prepare them for an increasingly competitive employment landscape.

Turning Learning into Demonstrable Skills

EtrainIndia operates in the industry-skilling and certification space, working with educational institutions, training environments, and learners to facilitate access to professional certification programmes. Its ecosystem includes programmes associated with Certiport-Pearson and certification pathways involving technology organisations such as Microsoft, Cisco, IBM, Meta, Adobe, and Autodesk.

The underlying principle is that learning becomes more valuable when students can apply their knowledge and demonstrate their capabilities.

Professional certifications, when supported by structured learning and practical assessment, can help learners validate their skills and communicate them more effectively to prospective employers.

For educational institutions, industry-aligned certifications provide an opportunity to complement academic curricula with practical competencies. For students, they offer additional pathways to strengthen their professional profiles and prepare for evolving workplace expectations. EtrainIndia has trained more than 10 lakh students nationwide through its certification programmes, reflecting the scale of its engagement with India's education and skills-development landscape.

Addressing the Employability Challenge

The employability challenge requires stronger collaboration between educational institutions and industry. As artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity and digital technologies transform businesses, professionals must continually update their capabilities to remain relevant.

Preparing students for this environment involves more than introducing new tools. It requires opportunities to learn, practise and apply skills in ways that reflect real-world expectations. Industry-aligned certification can contribute to this process by connecting classroom learning with practical applications and providing structured mechanisms for assessing competence. For organisations operating in the skilling ecosystem, the responsibility also lies in building credible partnerships, understanding learner needs and making relevant learning opportunities more accessible.

EtrainIndia's approach reflects this objective by connecting learners and institutions with established certification ecosystems and structured professional development pathways.

Building for a Changing Future

The future of work will increasingly reward adaptability, continuous learning, and the ability to translate knowledge into meaningful outcomes. Education, therefore, cannot end with graduation; it must provide a foundation for lifelong professional development.

Through his work with EtrainIndia, Gaurav Kapoor is part of the broader effort to strengthen the relationship between education and opportunity. The larger goal is to create a more connected talent-development ecosystem where academic knowledge, practical skills, and professional validation complement one another.

As India advances towards a digitally-driven economy, the measure of educational success will increasingly extend beyond qualifications to the capabilities learners bring to the workplace. Bridging this gap is essential to building a workforce equipped for tomorrow's opportunities—and to bringing education closer to the realities of the world beyond the classroom. ●

Evolving Traditions: *Lakshman Shrivastava's Approach to the Evolution of Ayurvedic Experiences*



For Ayurveda to establish a stronger international presence, its future must be built on more than renewed interest in traditional wellness. It requires institutions that can preserve the knowledge, evolve the experience delivery, deliver services responsibly, and communicate the relevance to contemporary audiences. Mr. Lakshman Shrivastava's work across Maharishi Ayurveda reflects this challenge and the opportunity to shape a more experiential-based future for the sector.

A third-generation custodian of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's legacy and a certified Transcendental Meditation teacher, Mr. Shrivastava approaches healthcare through a philosophy that connects physical wellbeing with mental balance, consciousness, and daily living. His leadership seeks to translate these principles into contemporary healthcare and wellness experiences without compromising the foundations of Ayurveda.

His responsibilities span several dimensions of the organisation. As Director of the International Maharishi Ayurveda Foundation, Managing Director of Maharishi Ayurveda Hospital in Delhi, and CEO of Maharishi Ayurveda Wellness Hospitality, he leads initiatives across hospital-based care, wellness hospitality, and international expansion. The Maharishi Ayurveda Health Centre in the Netherlands and the Maharishi Ayurveda Clinic on Harley Street, London, extend this work to international settings.

For Mr. Shrivastava, the institutional dimension is critical. International audiences need clear information, professional service delivery, and confidence in the people and institutions providing care. Building this confidence requires Ayurveda to be represented with integrity, with appropriate distinctions between traditional principles, individual treatment approaches, and the broader claims made about health outcomes.

Maharishi Ayurveda Hospital's experience of welcoming guests from more than 120 countries illustrates the organisation's international reach. Meanwhile, the wellness retreat in Rishikesh and the centres in London and the Netherlands offer different settings in which people can engage with Ayurvedic consultations, therapies, and wellness experiences.

Innovation within this ecosystem is not confined to clinical services. SOMA – The Ayurvedic Kitchen at Maharishi Ayurveda Hospital brings Ayurvedic dietary principles into a contemporary food experience, demonstrating how traditional knowledge can be communicated beyond conventional healthcare settings. The initiative reflects Mr. Shrivastava's wider interest in making Ayurveda relevant to everyday life.

The growing recognition of Mr. Lakshman Shrivastava's work reflects a broader contribution to the advancement of Ayurveda and contemporary healthcare. His inclusion among Outlook magazine's Game Changers of Healthcare recognises his role in shaping the sector's evolving narrative. The Best Medical and Wellness Centre of the Year honour conferred on Maharishi Ayurveda Hospital at the ET Healthcare Awards 2025 further underscores the institution's standing, while the industry accolades received by SOMA – The Ayurvedic Kitchen, a first-of-its kind dining experience based on Ayurveda. This highlights the potential of bringing Ayurvedic principles into new and relevant experiences with many more to follow. Collectively, these recognitions lend weight to a leadership approach that seeks to preserve Ayurveda's foundations while expanding its relevance across healthcare and wellness.

With further wellness projects planned in Uttarkashi, Jaipur, and Tirupati, Mr. Shrivastava's expansion vision continues to develop across India, complemented by the organisation's international centres.

The larger objective is to create a future in which Ayurveda's heritage is supported by credible institutions, responsible practice, and meaningful engagement with global audiences. For Mr. Shrivastava, modernising Ayurveda delivery is not about changing the essence, it is about developing the institutional capacity to carry its principles forward with authenticity, clarity, and purpose. ●



Strengthening Operational Excellence and *Shaping the Future of Real Estate*

Kunal Rishi, Chief Operating Officer, Krisumi Corporation

In an industry driven by evolving consumer aspirations, changing market dynamics and increasing expectations for quality, effective leadership plays a defining role in building successful organisations. At the intersection of business strategy and operational execution, Kunal Rishi, Chief Operating Officer at Krisumi Corporation, represents the importance of strong operational leadership in India's evolving real estate landscape.

As Chief Operating Officer, Kunal Rishi holds a significant leadership position within the organisation, with a professional focus on business operations, strategic execution and organisational performance. The COO's role is central to translating business objectives into actionable strategies, ensuring operational alignment and supporting the organisation's long-term growth ambitions.

Leadership Beyond Operations

In today's competitive real estate environment, operational excellence extends far beyond managing everyday business functions. It requires a comprehensive understanding of market expectations, efficient processes, cross-functional coordination and the ability to respond to emerging opportunities.

For a real estate organisation, these capabilities are particularly important. From project execution and customer experience to organisational efficiency and business development, every operational decision contributes to the larger vision of creating lasting value.

Kunal Rishi's leadership role at Krisumi Corporation places him within this important business framework, where strategic thinking and execution discipline are essential to organisational progress.

Contributing to an Evolving Real Estate Landscape

India's real estate sector is undergoing a significant transformation, supported by infrastructure development, urbanisation and changing lifestyle preferences. Homebuyers increasingly seek developments that combine quality, thoughtful planning, modern amenities and long-term value.

In this environment, strong operational leadership becomes a critical differentiator. Organisations must continuously strengthen their processes, maintain execution standards and create experiences that respond to the expectations of modern customers.

As Chief Operating Officer, Kunal Rishi's position reflects the importance of aligning operational priorities with these broader industry developments.

Looking Towards the Future

The future of real estate will be shaped by organisations that combine strategic vision with operational excellence. Leadership, accountability, innovation and customer-centric thinking will continue to play an important role in determining the industry's next phase of growth.

Through his leadership position at Krisumi Corporation, Kunal Rishi is part of the professional leadership landscape contributing to this evolving sector. ●



Where Strategy *Meets Storytelling*

Anurag Tripathi | Associate Vice President – Marketing & Corporate Communication | KREEVA, Kanodia Group

Anurag Tripathi is a seasoned marketing and corporate communications professional with 14 years of experience in brand strategy, integrated marketing, public relations, corporate communications, and customer experience, with extensive expertise in the real estate sector.

As Associate Vice President – Marketing & Corporate Communication at KREEVA, the luxury real estate venture of the Kanodia Group, Anurag plays a key role in shaping the brand's identity, strengthening its market presence, and developing strategic marketing and communication initiatives for the luxury residential segment.

His expertise spans brand positioning, media relations, public relations, integrated marketing campaigns, digital strategy, brand partnerships, and customer experience management from a marketing perspective. He focuses on creating meaningful brand interactions across the customer journey, strengthening engagement, and translating business vision into compelling brand narratives and impactful market experiences.

At KREEVA, Anurag contributes to advancing the brand philosophy of "Reimagine Possibilities", bringing together strategic storytelling, creative communication, and consumer insights to build a distinctive presence in the competitive luxury real estate market. His approach emphasises contemporary luxury, design-led living, innovation, and a deeper understanding of evolving customer aspirations.

Prior to joining KREEVA, Anurag spent approximately a decade with BPTP Limited, where he gained extensive experience across marketing, brand communication, customer relationship management, collections, and stakeholder engagement. This diverse background has given him a comprehensive understanding of the real estate business, particularly the role of marketing in shaping customer perceptions, enhancing the buying experience, and building long-term brand relationships.

With a blend of strategic thinking, industry knowledge, and executional expertise, Anurag believes that enduring brands are built on trust, consistency, differentiated experiences, and a clear understanding of customer expectations. At KREEVA, he continues to contribute to building a premium real estate brand backed by the legacy of the Kanodia Group and driven by a forward-looking vision of luxury living. ●

CORE EXPERTISE:

- Brand Strategy & Positioning
- Luxury Real Estate Marketing
- Corporate Communications
- Public Relations & Media Engagement
- Integrated Marketing
- Digital & Social Media Strategy
- Customer Experience & Engagement
- Brand Development

Where Experience *Builds Brands*



Dr. K.N. Jha | General Manager – Brand | Kanodia Group

India's cement industry has played a vital role in the country's infrastructure development, housing growth and economic progress. As competition intensifies and customer expectations evolve, the industry increasingly demands professionals who understand not only manufacturing and distribution but also market dynamics, brand positioning and long-term business strategy.

One such professional is Dr. K. N. Jha, General Manager – Brand at Kanodia Group, a Noida-based, rapidly growing business conglomerate with major interests in cement manufacturing, hygiene products and luxury real estate, including its KREEVA brand. With more than 35 years of experience in the Indian cement industry, Dr. Jha brings together academic knowledge, practical industry experience and a deep understanding of marketing and brand development in the Indian business environment. His professional journey reflects a sustained engagement with cement marketing, rural marketing, brand strategy and the relationship between economic development and business growth.

A Strong Academic Foundation and Industry Experience

Dr. Jha's professional approach is supported by a strong academic background. He is a first-class postgraduate in Economics, holds an MBA in Marketing and has earned a Ph.D.

This multidisciplinary education provides a foundation for understanding business from several perspectives: economic analysis, consumer behaviour, market competition and strategic management.

Over more than three decades in the cement industry, he has developed extensive knowledge of the sector's commercial and marketing dimensions. His experience reflects the importance of understanding regional demand, distribution networks, customer relationships and brand differentiation in a highly competitive market.

Six Publications Reflecting a Continuing Knowledge Journey

Dr. Jha's published works cover economics, rural development, branding and cement marketing. His listed publications include:

Economics and Impact of Technology Transfer to Rural Area (1994) — Examines the relationship between technology transfer and rural development.

ABC of Brand Building in India (2020) — Focuses on brand development and branding principles in the Indian business context.

— Addresses the distinctive characteristics and marketing opportunities of rural India.

ABC of Cement Marketing in India (2025) — Explores marketing principles and practices relevant to the Indian cement industry; published in both English and Hindi.

ABC of Cement Brands in India – Past, Present & Future (2026) — Examines the subject of cement brands and their development in India.

Articles in Reputed Journals — His professional writing also includes several articles published in reputed journals. Together, these works reflect a continuing engagement with the practical and strategic questions that shape business growth, market development and brand positioning.

Looking Ahead: The Future of Marketing and Brand Leadership

India's cement and construction sectors are expected to remain closely connected to infrastructure development, housing demand and evolving construction requirements. At the same time, businesses face increasing pressure to differentiate their offerings, communicate responsibly and build durable customer relationships.

Digital communication, data-driven decision-making and changing consumer expectations are creating new opportunities for brands to strengthen their market presence. Sustainability and operational efficiency are also becoming important considerations across the construction value chain.

In this environment, effective brand leadership requires a combination of market knowledge, commercial understanding and the ability to translate strategy into meaningful customer value.

Professionals with extensive industry experience and a multidisciplinary perspective can contribute to this process by connecting economic realities with practical marketing decisions. ●

Dushyant Sinha: *Building an Integrated Communications Group*



Dushyant Sinha's journey from a modest beginning to building ICCPL Group reflects his belief in the power of clear communication, strong relationships, and steady execution. Founded in 2011, ICCPL has grown into one of India's leading independent communications groups, with a particular strength in real estate.

Under Sinha's leadership, the Group has served more than 500 clients and delivered over 6,000 successful campaigns across India and international markets. It is working towards crossing 7,000 campaigns by FY 2026–27 and has set a target valuation of ₹400 crore by FY27.

Sinha's approach brings traditional media relations together with digital strategy, creative storytelling, reputation management, and data-led communication. The Group's capabilities include public relations and corporate communications, digital and performance marketing, creative services, crisis communications, influencer marketing, and strategic brand advisory.

ICCPL Group's portfolio includes ICCPL PR, DigiComm and Studio 360, alongside its media, hospitality and other business ventures. Together, these businesses help clients shape their communications across channels, from public relations and digital marketing to creative development and reputation programmes.

The Group has built an operational and media network spanning more than 40 cities in India, with a presence in markets including Delhi, Gurugram, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chandigarh and Goa. It is also expanding its presence internationally, including in the UAE and Southeast Asia. Its next phase of growth includes strengthening its digital and technology capabilities, with investment in areas such as AI-enabled communication, reputation monitoring and automation.

A specialisation in real estate

Real estate has been central to Sinha's work since ICCPL's early years. The Group has advised developers and other sector stakeholders on corporate and project communications, launches, investment announcements, leadership positioning, crisis response and long-term reputation programmes. Its work spans residential, commercial, retail, mixed-use and luxury developments.

Sinha's focus is on helping organisations communicate their plans and milestones clearly to buyers, investors, the media and other stakeholders. His work combines an understanding of the business behind a development with the ability to build a credible story around it. Over time, this sector focus has helped ICCPL develop lasting client relationships and a specialised communications practice.

Leadership and the road ahead

Sinha believes that consistency, client trust and the people behind the work are essential to building a lasting business. He is now guiding ICCPL's transition into a more institutionalised communications group, with plans to strengthen its leadership, expand geographically and deepen its digital and technology capabilities.

Recent awards and recognition

Sinha was named Marketing & Communication Professional of the Year at the ET Business Leaders 2024. In 2025, he received the Gems of Delhi recognition from Times Network for his contribution to public relations and communications, and was recognised among Young Game Changers of Indian Realty by Outlook.

In 2026, Sinha was recognised for Excellence in Marketing, Public Relations & Communications in the real estate sector at ET Brand Equity's Real Estate Marketing Excellence. ICCPL Group also received Excellence in PR & Communications at the ET Now Realty Conclave & Awards 2026.

The Group has also been recognised for its workplace culture and agency work. ICCPL received the Best Place to Work under MSME award at the Bharat Nirman Awards 2025, hosted by HT Media Group. DigiComm was named Digital Marketing Agency of the Year at the Realty+ Conclave & Excellence Awards 2025 – North. ●



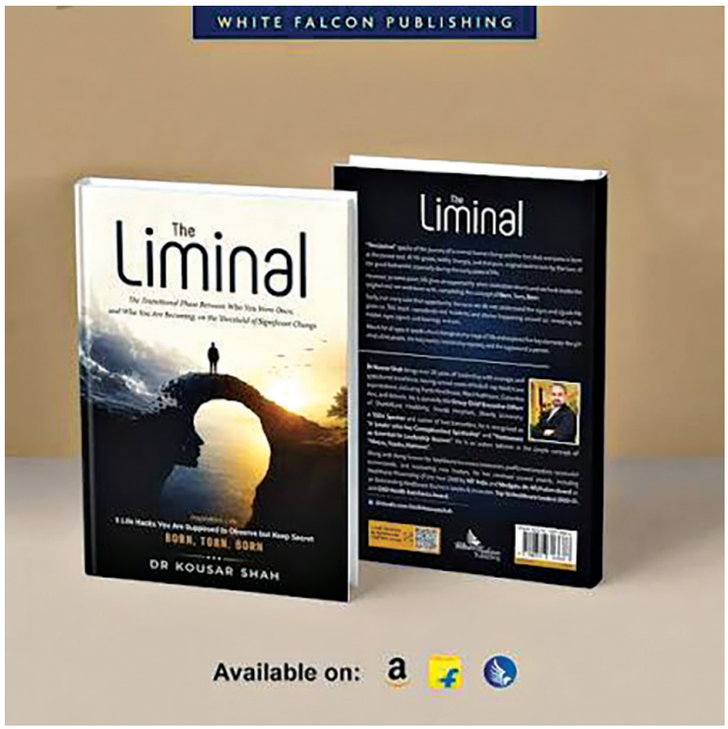
Dr. Kousar Shah: *Where Leadership Meets the Journey of Self-Discovery*

With over 25 years of experience in healthcare leadership, Dr. Kousar Shah has served prominent organisations, including Fortis Healthcare, Max Healthcare, Columbia Asia, and Artemis. He currently serves as Group Chief Executive Officer of ShardaCare, overseeing leadership responsibilities across ShardaCare Healthcity, Sharda Hospitals (Sharda University). A TEDx speaker and an author, he brings together business excellence, humaneness, and spirituality in his approach to his leadership style.

His third book, The Liminal – 5 Life Hacks You Are Supposed to Observe but Keep Secret, explores the transitional phase between who we once were and who we are becoming. It encourages readers to recognise life's subtle lessons, embrace change, and develop greater self-awareness. The book was featured at number one Best Seller in Amazon's Motivational Self-Help eBooks category, as reflected in the ranking shared for the title.

In this book, he has shared the concept of Born, Torn, Born, which examines how experiences, relationships, and societal expectations shape individuals over time and how everyone's life has the potential to take a complete course from being born to being torn to again being born, hence the concept of Born, Torn, Born. Through real-life situations, it explores themes such as childhood, toxic relationships, women in leadership, and social labels, encouraging readers to reconnect with their authentic selves.

Dr. Shah's philosophy centres on "Mansa, Vaacha, Karmana" — alignment of thought, speech, and action, and that's the only way to bring any genuine change in self. His professional journey and literary work reflect a shared belief that meaningful success extends beyond achievements to encompass integrity, introspection, and responsibility towards others, and to continuously keep becoming a better human being first. ●



From Army Surgeon to *Institution-Builder*



Dr. Raajiv Singhal, Founding Member, Group Managing Director & CEO, Marengo Asia Hospitals

A first-generation entrepreneur, Dr. Raajiv Singhal built Marengo Asia Hospitals from his family's apartment into a 2,500-bed network in six years, guided by one principle: Patient First.

In October 2020, in the middle of a pandemic, Dr. Raajiv Singhal founded Marengo Asia Hospitals from his family's apartment in Gurugram. The first doctor in his family, with no inherited platform to build on, he set out to create an institution where clinical excellence, compassion and integrity come together. Six years on, Marengo Asia is a network of eight multi-specialty hospitals and 2,500 beds, including a hospital in Saudi Arabia, with more than 7,000 colleagues.

A graduate and postgraduate of the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune, Dr. Singhal served as a surgeon in the Indian Army for 14 years before entering corporate healthcare in 2004. At Ruby Hall Clinic and Fortis, he rose through the ranks and learnt every aspect of hospital leadership. As Regional Director at Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, he pioneered India's first e-ICU and hub-and-spoke Heart Command Centres across domestic and international markets, work recognised with the Government of Karnataka's Innovation in Healthcare Award. He later strengthened his strategic capabilities through healthcare management training at IIM Ahmedabad.

In 2015, he moved into private equity as Operating Partner with a Dubai-based fund, helping raise USD 1 billion from global investors including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Morgan Stanley and the sovereign funds of Norway and France. That capital built hospital platforms across Africa and South Asia, and as Group CEO of the Evercare platform, he oversaw more than 2,200 beds across 12 hospitals.

At Marengo Asia, he has turned that global experience into a distinctive model. Its Centres of Excellence in cardiac sciences, oncology, neurosciences, orthopaedics and transplant have performed over 71 heart, 2,200 liver and 2,500 renal transplants. Its "Clinical Corridors" model and 3Ts approach—Teach, Train, Treat—build sustainable clinical capacity across Asia, the Middle East and Africa, while tele-robotic surgery has connected a surgeon in Faridabad with a patient in Kolkata nearly 1,500 kilometres away. Chosen as a preferred Medical Value Travel partner at the Indo-UK Summit in London in 2025, the group works with partners including the NHS (UK) and Mass General Brigham (USA), and its partnership with LeapFrog Investments marks its next phase of growth.

> **"Growth gives us scale; clinical excellence earns us trust."**
>
> – DR. RAAJIV SINGHAL

Beyond Marengo, Dr. Singhal is a leading voice for Indian healthcare. He chairs FICCI's Medical Value Travel Committee and CII Healthcare (Northern Region), and mentors healthcare start-ups at NATHEALTH. In June 2026, he received the Global Prestige Award at the House of Lords, UK Parliament, for strengthening India's position as a trusted global healthcare partner, and he has been recognised by Forbes Middle East for driving progress in the region's medical and wellness sectors.

For Dr. Singhal, the true measure of success is not how large an institution becomes, but how well it cares for its patients, how effectively it develops its people and how responsibly it grows. ●



Beyond Visibility: *How AI, Media and Policy Are Redefining Influence*

Jai Kewalramani, Founder, Jaibo

For decades, the communications industry operated on a relatively familiar premise: tell a compelling story, take it to the right media, and reach the audience that matters. That premise is being rewritten. Today, an opinion about a company can take shape through a journalist's investigation, a creator's video, a conversation on social media, or an answer generated by artificial intelligence.

The scale of this transformation is especially striking in India. According to the IAMAI–Kantar Internet in India 2025 report, the country has 958 million active internet users, while 44% have engaged with AI-enabled features ranging from voice search to chatbots. Globally, the Reuters Institute's Digital News Report 2026 found that 54% of respondents across 48 markets use social media and video networks for news. The same study found that 27% get at least some news from individual news-focused creators.

These shifts are changing not only where people find information, but whom they listen to and how they form their views. Influence is no longer concentrated in a handful of publications or institutions. It is built across communities, experts, journalists, creators and increasingly the digital systems that connect their work to audiences.

AI introduces a particularly significant change. People are beginning to ask tools to explain industries, compare businesses and make sense of complex issues rather than simply search for a list of links. Those answers may draw on journalism, research, public records and company information. They can also be incomplete or wrong. But the direction is clear: businesses have to think beyond whether their message was published to whether their reputation can stand up to scrutiny across different sources.

I see this as an opportunity for public relations to become more substantive, not less relevant. Advertising can create reach; campaigns can spark interest. But credibility is established through consistent conduct, independent perspectives, informed commentary and evidence that people can verify. In an AI-mediated information environment, repeating a claim is no substitute for substantiating it.

There is a second dimension to this evolution that businesses cannot overlook: public policy. Technology is transforming commerce, healthcare, finance and the way information moves, while governments are adapting the rules that shape these sectors. A consumer concern can become a media debate and then a policy question. A regulatory decision can, in turn, redefine an entire market. Communication, digital engagement and government relations can no longer be treated as isolated activities.

This thinking informs the work we do at **Jaibo**, bringing media, digital and public affairs together to help organisations reach relevant audiences, contribute informed perspectives and navigate India's evolving business environment.

For those of us in communications, the challenge is not to chase every new platform or algorithm. It is to understand how people build trust across them. The future of influence belongs not simply to the loudest voices, but to those whose ideas remain credible wherever the conversation takes place. ●

Beyond the Clinic: *Dr Navneet Arora's Mission to Make Infectious Disease Care More Accessible*

From specialised clinical practice and academic medicine to public education through THEFEVERDOCTOR, Dr Navneet Arora is working to bring infectious disease expertise closer to the people who need it.



Infectious diseases demand clinical expertise, sound judgement, and clear communication. For Dr Navneet Arora, an infectious disease specialist with approximately a decade of experience, these responsibilities extend beyond treating patients to building specialised services and making reliable medical knowledge accessible to the public.

His interest in medicine was shaped in part by his grandfather, a former Assistant Director of Health Services in Haryana, whom he saw serving people through healthcare. This early influence helped shape his aspiration to pursue a career dedicated to patient care.

Dr Arora's professional journey includes associations with institutions of national importance, including the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, and Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore. He subsequently served as an Assistant Professor in the Department of General Medicine at Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH-32), Chandigarh, under the Chandigarh Administration. Alongside providing specialised infectious disease care, he mentored medical students and contributed to academic medicine. His academic contributions include more than 50 publications in international medical journals, including The Lancet Infectious Diseases. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he was recognised as a COVID warrior by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Currently associated with Paras Hospital, Panchkula, as a Principal Consultant, Dr Navneet Arora has worked towards establishing specialised infectious disease services in the Chandigarh tricity region. He has also established NAVDISHA MEDICARE in Chandigarh, reflecting his broader ambition to strengthen access to dedicated infectious disease care in India.

Beyond clinical practice, Dr Arora reaches a wider audience through THEFEVERDOCTOR, his digital medical education platform. Through accessible content, he addresses common misconceptions about infections, promotes awareness, and encourages people to make informed decisions about seeking medical care. For him, digital communication is a meaningful extension of a doctor's responsibility to educate and serve the community.

@THEFEVERDOCTOR

Looking ahead, Dr Arora aims to contribute to a stronger infectious disease ecosystem in India, grounded in evidence-based medicine, ethical practice, and accessible specialist care. His work reflects a simple principle: medical knowledge matters most when it can be translated into better-informed decisions for patients and the wider public. ●

Bridging Medicine, Wellness and *Public Health*

Dr. Mohd Sharif Siddiqui, widely known as Dr. Mohd Sharif, is a physician, sexual medicine consultant and healthcare entrepreneur. He is the Founder of AmmaNisha Healthcare Pvt. Ltd. and Founder and President of Nisha Health Care and Educational Society. His qualifications include MD (AM), BUMS, PGDPC, FIANT, Diploma in Pharmacy, diplomas in Psychological Counselling and Yoga Therapy, and training in Sexology, Psychosexual Medicine, Naturopathy and Sexual Medicine. His areas of interest include General Medicine, sexual health, men's sexual health, STI awareness, HIV prevention, lifestyle modification, longevity and public health education. Raised in a family with educational guidance, he attended a government school and worked alongside his studies. Through practice and initiatives, he promotes health awareness, workshops and outreach, including services for underserved communities. His work embraces mental well-being, yoga and integrative healthcare. Guided by "Healthy Youth, Healthy India," his vision is to empower youth, promote wellness and build a healthier India. ●





How Vytalyou is addressing India's Healthspan Crisis: *Preventive Healthcare Is No Longer Optional, It's a necessity!*

Founders of Vytalyou
Dr Chirantan Bose & Dr Preetesh Bhandari

India stands at a critical crossroads in its healthcare journey. While life expectancy has steadily improved, a more concerning reality is emerging—Indians are living longer, but significantly less healthy lives. The widening gap between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy highlights a silent epidemic: millions are spending over a decade battling chronic illness.

India's life expectancy is approximately 72 years, but healthy life expectancy drops sharply to just 59 years. This means the average Indian spends nearly 13 years in poor health, grappling with chronic diseases, reduced productivity, and diminished quality of life.

This gap is largely driven by the rapid rise of lifestyle-related conditions—diabetes, fatty liver disease, cardiovascular disorders, and metabolic syndrome—all of which are reaching epidemic proportions in India. What makes this crisis more alarming is that these conditions develop silently over years, often escaping detection until irreversible damage has occurred. The traditional reactive healthcare model, which focuses on treatment after disease onset, is no longer sufficient.

Preventive healthcare is no longer an option—it is an urgent necessity.

The future of healthcare lies in prediction, personalization, and proactive intervention. This is where Vytalyou's revolutionary Ultraprecision Longevity Report is redefining the landscape. By leveraging deep analysis of blood biomarkers, radiological imaging, functional cardio-respiratory assessment and body composition measurement, Vytalyou integrates Medical Diagnostics with advanced artificial intelligence to generate a predictive health trajectory for an individual. This enables early identification of risks long before they manifest clinically, allowing for timely and targeted interventions.

However, the true power of this approach lies in translating insights into action. Based on predictive modelling, Vytalyou's medical team designs highly personalized longevity protocols tailored to each individual's biological profile. These protocols go beyond conventional care, incorporating advanced therapeutic modalities aimed at optimizing cellular health.

Key interventions include intravenous supplementation with mitochondrial bio-enzymes and over 30 essential coenzymes and micronutrients, which target basic cellular repair and DNA damage mechanisms. This is complemented by hyperbaric oxygen therapy, which enhances tissue oxygenation and promotes regeneration; photobiomodulation, which improves cellular signaling and reduces inflammation; and cryotherapy, which aids recovery and metabolic optimization. These are further appended by Red laser and quantum magnetic therapies which hold immense non-invasive potential in healing and tissue repair.

These cutting-edge therapies are not merely experimental—they are increasingly demonstrating the ability to control chronic inflammation, slow cellular degeneration, and even reverse early-stage metabolic disorders. Conditions such as fatty liver disease and pre-diabetes, which are highly prevalent across India, have shown significant improvement with structured, personalized interventions. This represents a paradigm shift—from disease management to disease reversal.

Equally important is the shift toward a continuous optimization model. Health is no longer assessed episodically but monitored dynamically, with interventions adjusted in real time. This ensures sustained improvements rather than temporary fixes.

The ultimate goal is not just longevity, but healthspan—living more years in optimal physical, metabolic, and cognitive health. For India, this shift is critical. Reducing the 13-year gap between lifespan and healthspan could transform not only individual lives but also the nation's economic and healthcare burden.

India's health crisis demands a new approach—one that prioritizes early detection, predictive analytics, and personalized intervention. In this new era, preventive healthcare is not a luxury reserved for a few; it is the foundation of sustainable health for all.

The message is clear: the future of healthcare is not about treating disease—it is about preventing it before it begins. ●

Where Education, Innovation and *Enterprise Converge*

The man turning a B-School into a launchpad for India's bioscience ambitions.



When Harvard geneticist Dr David Sinclair, Padma Shri Dr Kumarasamy Thangaraj and Apollo Hospitals' Dr Sangita Reddy share one stage, someone has made it happen. That someone is Sudhanshu Garg.

Garg, a founding member and Senior Director at Masters' Union University, organised The Next Gene, Asia's largest bioscience summit, and made a larger point: that India's health future will be built where conventional science, advanced technology, capital and enterprise meet, and that he is among the few who can bring them together.



His conviction is simple: education must be hands-on, data-driven and rooted in what students aspire to become. That belief now takes institutional form. The Kalam School of Bioscience is conceived as a new kind of science school, where genomics meets computation, CRISPR becomes curriculum, and the next generation of researchers learn to redesign biology itself. Alongside it comes MentorUnion, a platform that connects students directly with C-suite leaders, turning access once reserved for the few into an everyday advantage.

Behind it stands a rare network. Since 2021, Garg has spearheaded the core operations of the university: faculty, curriculum and academics, corporate and brand partnerships, and centres of excellence. He has drawn hundreds of top CXOs and unicorn founders into the classroom to teach and mentor. Few in Indian education can summon such a roster; fewer can sustain it.

His rigour was forged in institutions that trade on trust. At S&P Global Market Intelligence, one of the world's most respected financial data houses, he supported the investment banking and private equity investments of S&P Global's partners across New York, London and Buenos Aires. At Ashoka University, among India's most admired institutions, he raised funds for campus development from leading ultra-high-net-worth individuals and large conglomerates, turning CSR donor engagements into need-blind scholarship endowments that will serve students for generations.

Others study the future of Indian bioscience; Garg is building it, one institution, one mentor, and one stage at a time. ●



Educating Minds, Healing Lives: *Dr. Devesh Kumar Singh's Vision for Global Learning and Accessible Healthcare*

Advancing Education, Strengthening Healthcare

The Chairman of Noida International University and NIIMS Medical College and Hospital is advancing a vision connecting academic quality, global opportunity and accessible healthcare.

For Dr. Devesh Kumar Singh, leadership means creating opportunities to learn, practise and contribute. With his medical background, Dr. Singh brought an understanding of healthcare and a vision for education to his leadership of NIU in 2014.

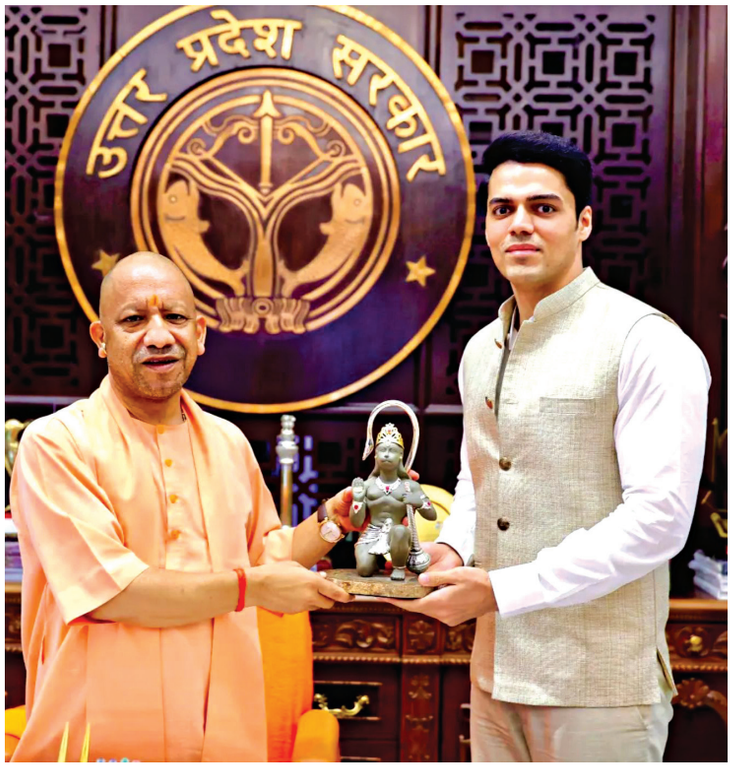
Under his chairmanship, NIU has developed into a multidisciplinary university welcoming students from over 65 countries to its 75-acre campus. Its NAAC A+ accreditation, with a first-cycle score of 3.44, marks a significant achievement.

His commitment to medical education finds expression in NIIMS's 900-bed teaching hospital, supported by operation theatres, specialised intensive care, emergency services and advanced diagnostics, including a Siemens 1.5-tesla MRI system.

Under his leadership, NIIMS has reached a significant milestone in medical education, with its NMC-approved MBBS intake rising from 150 to 250 seats for 2026–27, complemented by 84 postgraduate seats across 12 MD and MS specialties.

Through the Chairman's Ambassador Global Scholarship Programme, he is also widening international educational access.

His focus remains on translating institutional growth into opportunities for students and meaningful service to patients and communities. ●



Finishing What *Others Left Behind*

Sumit Khanna and Geetanjali Khanna built ReaRCo to do the hardest thing in Indian real estate: complete the homes everyone else gave up on



Sumit Khanna, Founder, and Geetanjali Khanna, Founder & Managing Director, ReaRCo Private Limited

In 2019, work stopped at a housing project in Greater Noida (West). For the next six years its towers stood unfinished, and hundreds of families who had paid for homes there were left with a promise and no keys. This year, the first 644 of those homes are being handed over.

The company behind that turnaround is ReaRCo, short for Real Estate Asset Resolution Company. Set up in 2021 and led by its founders Sumit Khanna and Geetanjali Khanna, it does what most of the industry avoids: it takes on projects that have stalled and sees them through to possession.

The two bring complementary strengths. Sumit Khanna, Founder, leads restructuring and M&A and has taken more than thirty companies through insolvency. Geetanjali Khanna, Founder and Managing Director, brings more than three decades in business and leads strategy, governance and the running of the company. One makes the numbers work; the other makes sure the promises are kept. "Possession is the only thing that settles an argument in Indian real estate," says Sumit. "Approvals can be renewed, funding can be arranged, drawings can be revised. None of it counts until somebody is handed keys."

Vayu @ KVD Windpark was where that conviction was tested. ReaRCo came in through the NCLT-led insolvency process, and its resolution plan was approved in 2023, voted through by the homebuyers themselves, who sat as creditors. Construction restarted in 2024 with last-mile funding from the SWAMIH Investment Fund, and earlier bookings were honoured at their original prices.

"A family that has waited six years doesn't need another brochure," says Geetanjali. "It needs a date, and then it needs us to keep it. Every decision we make is measured against that."

With Phase 1 being handed over, ReaRCo has turned to Symphony, Towers 4 and 5 at Vayu and the first phase the company has designed rather than inherited. The plan was reworked for today's buyers: fewer, larger homes, just three to a floor and every one a corner home, with the Cirrus Sky Lounge on the 28th and 29th floors. Symphony was named Excellence in Upcoming Project of the Year - Noida at the Times Realty & Infrastructure Conclave 2026, one of four recognitions for ReaRCo this year, alongside Woman of the Year in Real Estate Industry for Geetanjali at the ET Women's Conclave.

The model is now travelling. In Chennai, ReaRCo is applying the same discipline to its second resolution, at Sabari Serenity. "Most of what we learnt in Greater Noida transferred intact," says Sumit. "Capability compounds where improvisation does not."

For the founders, the larger opportunity is national. Across India, thousands of families are still waiting on homes in stalled projects. ReaRCo's bet is that resolution can become a repeatable specialism, with known stages, known costs and dates that buyers can hold a developer to.

"India has already paid for a great deal of housing that was never delivered," says Sumit. "Most of it can still be built." ●



Ms. Sudha Gupta: *Building Schools Where Children Blossom, Lead and Leave Their Mark*

A childhood among books and educationists became a lifelong mission. Ms. Sudha Gupta shares the whys behind Mother's Pride, Presidium and a bold vision for India's children.

Ms. Sudha Gupta spent 17 years on the NCERT campus, growing up among professors, leaders and a vast library. Teaching was the limit of her ambition, until her involvement in her eldest son's playschool showed her how early experiences shape a life.

Mother's Pride (1996). She opened Mother's Pride on the philosophy "Love Blossoms Here," where childhood was celebrated and everything was age-appropriate. Mother's Pride is now a legacy of 30 years and continues to nurture children with its 'Curriculum of Love'.

Presidium (2005). Parents wanted the same quality beyond preschool, so she founded Presidium to educate children from K 12. Its promise, "be what you want to be," grew into 140 schools across North India.

Presidium continues to be a school of 'Leadership', creating leaders in all the walk of life & enabling them to live a happy, successful & powerful life.

Recognition. Ms. Gupta has received numerous national and international awards which includes the Most Promising Enterprise of the Year Award, Golden Peacock award in London, the Global Excellence Award in Education in Mumbai, and the Rashtriya Ratna Samman, along with the Global Life Skill Excellence Award for Leave Your Mark. Presidium curriculum books have won several national and international awards. Presidium has also been ranked No. 1 by Times Now. Its students have won over 8,000 awards, and the school has produced a Uttar Pradesh state topper, Ashvik Jain, felicitated by Honorable Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Leave Your Mark (2023). To move beyond a marks-driven society, she introduced 10 LIFE & LEADERSHIP SKILLS including emotional strength, courage, communication and creativity.

Behind it all are 3,000 team members, an extended family whose livelihoods inspire her to keep growing. From 2026, her goal is to bring transformational education to millions more students. ●



Prikansha Luthra: *Bringing Strategic Perspective and Purposeful Leadership to India's Defence Sector*



Building a business in a strategically significant industry requires a combination of vision, sound judgement and the ability to create strong organisational foundations. In the defence sector, where regulatory responsibilities and long-term industrial ambitions shape business decisions, leadership also calls for a measured approach to growth. As Co-Founder and Director of Vijayan Trishul Defence Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (VTDS), Prikansha Luthra brings this perspective to an entrepreneurial journey centred on India's evolving defence ecosystem.

Co-founded in 2024, VTDS was established with an ambition to contribute to India's indigenous small arms and ammunition landscape. The company operates within a sector that is receiving increasing attention as the country seeks to strengthen domestic industrial capabilities, encourage technological collaboration and advance the objectives of Aatmanirbhar Bharat. As one of the company's founding leaders, Prikansha contributes to shaping the organisational and strategic framework required to pursue these ambitions.

Her role reflects an understanding that building an enterprise involves much more than defining its market position. Sustainable growth depends on the systems, decisions and relationships that support an organisation behind the scenes. Financial discipline, operational coordination, strategic planning and institutional credibility all play a part in determining whether an ambitious business can develop into a resilient organisation. These considerations are particularly relevant in the defence sector, where the regulatory and technical environment demands careful planning.

At VTDS, Prikansha contributes to the company's financial, operational and strategic growth, working alongside Founder and Managing Director Sahil Luthra. Her involvement helps shape the organisational direction of the business as it establishes its presence and explores opportunities within the domestic defence ecosystem. The role calls for a balance between the company's long-term aspirations and the practical requirements of building a business capable of pursuing them responsibly.

VTDS has secured a licence from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, to manufacture and proof-test firearms and ammunition. This regulatory milestone provides an important foundation for the company's stated ambitions and reflects the significance of working within the appropriate statutory framework. For an enterprise operating in such a sensitive and closely regulated sector, an appreciation of compliance, accountability and institutional processes is integral to responsible growth.

Prikansha's contribution to the company can be understood through this wider perspective on organisational development. While strategic vision establishes the direction of a business, its progress also depends on the quality of its internal decision-making and the consistency with which its priorities are pursued. Building these foundations requires attention to detail, coordination across responsibilities and an appreciation of how individual business decisions influence the organisation as a whole.

The defence industry also presents a distinctive set of considerations for entrepreneurs. Opportunities often depend on long-term relationships, specialised expertise, regulatory clearances and the ability to work with stakeholders across different institutional and industrial environments. For a young enterprise, establishing cred-

ibility within this ecosystem requires a thoughtful approach to engagement and a clear understanding of its capabilities and objectives.

Within this environment, VTDS is exploring strategic collaborations and industrial partnerships that align with India's wider defence manufacturing ambitions. Its engagement with DEUS Automation a.s., associated with the STV Group ecosystem in the Czech Republic, focuses on small-calibre ammunition technology and industrial cooperation. Such collaborations reflect the growing importance of international engagement in exploring opportunities for knowledge exchange and strengthening domestic industrial capabilities.

The broader context is significant. The vision of Make in India extends beyond encouraging local production; it also creates a framework for developing industrial knowledge, establishing dependable supply ecosystems and enabling Indian enterprises to participate in specialised areas of manufacturing. Prikansha's work at VTDS forms part of the company's effort to establish the organisational foundations necessary to explore these possibilities over the long term.

Her leadership journey also reflects the evolving participation of women in India's business landscape. Across industries traditionally associated with male leadership, women entrepreneurs and directors are contributing to business strategy, institutional development and the creation of new enterprises. Their experiences broaden the understanding of leadership by demonstrating the many ways in which business-building can take shape.

For Prikansha, professional recognition has provided an opportunity to participate in this wider conversation. She has been featured by Entrepreneur News Network in its August 2026 coverage, "Women Powering Atmanirbhar Bharat: Top 5 Women Founder", which highlighted women contributing to India's entrepreneurial landscape. She has also been recognised in Hello Entrepreneur's 40 Under 40 2026 selection. These acknowledgements mark important moments in her professional journey and bring greater visibility to her role as a woman co-founder in the defence sector.

Such recognition is particularly relevant in an industry where entrepreneurship is closely associated with technical expertise, institutional relationships and long-term investment in capabilities. By establishing her place within this environment, Prikansha contributes to a broader representation of women in business leadership and demonstrates the importance of recognising leadership through responsibility, contribution and the work involved in building an organisation.

At the same time, her professional identity remains closely connected to the collective journey of VTDS. As a founding director, she shares in the responsibility of helping the company define its priorities, develop its organisational approach and pursue opportunities that align with its ambitions. This requires a perspective that considers not only immediate business requirements but also the long-term implications of the decisions being made today.



Her partnership with Sahil Luthra adds another dimension to this journey. As two of the company's founding leaders, they bring complementary perspectives to the business while working towards a common vision. Their shared commitment provides continuity to VTDS's entrepreneurial direction, while their respective responsibilities contribute to the different aspects of building and developing the organisation.

For Prikansha, leadership is closely connected to the ability to build with intention. A company's future is shaped not only by the opportunities it identifies but also by the foundations it establishes, the relationships it nurtures and the standards it seeks to uphold.

This perspective is particularly important for an enterprise working towards participation in a sector where progress requires patience, institutional understanding and a sustained commitment to responsible business practices.

As India continues to pursue greater self-reliance in defence, emerging enterprises have an opportunity to contribute to a broader transformation of the country's industrial landscape. Realising this opportunity requires individuals who can bring together entrepreneurial ambition and the discipline necessary to build lasting institutions. Prikansha's role at VTDS reflects this combination of strategic intent and organisational commitment.

Looking ahead, her journey remains linked to the company's ambition to establish a meaningful presence within India's indigenous defence ecosystem. Through her contribution to financial, operational and strategic development, she is helping shape the foundations on which VTDS intends to pursue its future opportunities.

For Prikansha Luthra, the story of entrepreneurship is ultimately about building something that can grow beyond its beginnings. It is about creating an organisation with a clear direction, a responsible approach to business and the capacity to evolve with the industry around it. As VTDS continues to develop its vision, her contribution remains part of a shared effort to participate in India's wider journey towards stronger domestic capabilities and a more self-reliant defence industrial future. ●



Sahil Luthra: *Building a Vision for India's Indigenous Defence Capabilities*

In a sector where technological advancement, strategic foresight and national priorities intersect, entrepreneurship demands more than commercial ambition. It requires a long-term perspective, the ability to recognise emerging opportunities and the conviction to build capabilities that can contribute to a country's strategic interests. For Sahil Luthra, Founder and Managing Director of Vijayan Trishul Defence Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (VTDS), these considerations form an important part of his entrepreneurial vision.

At the helm of VTDS, Sahil is working towards building an organisation that aspires to contribute to India's indigenous small arms and ammunition ecosystem. Founded in 2024, the company reflects his belief in the opportunities presented by India's evolving defence landscape, particularly the emphasis on domestic capabilities, technological collaboration and the development of a stronger industrial base under the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

His approach to entrepreneurship is rooted in recognising where India's strategic ambitions and industrial opportunities converge. The defence sector, with its complex regulatory requirements, technical considerations and long development cycles, calls for patience, institutional understanding and a commitment to building relationships that extend beyond immediate commercial outcomes. For Sahil, the journey involves laying the foundations for a business that can participate meaningfully in this evolving landscape.

VTDS has secured a licence from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, to manufacture and proof-test small arms and ammunition. This regulatory milestone represents an important step in establishing the framework within which the company intends to pursue its ambitions. Operating in a highly regulated industry requires an appreciation of compliance, accountability and the responsibilities associated with defence-related activities. These considerations remain central to the company's long-term outlook.

As Founder and Managing Director, Sahil Luthra provides the strategic direction for VTDS, focusing on institutional relationships, industry engagement, partnerships and opportunities that can support the company's future growth. His responsibilities extend to identifying potential collaborators, engaging with stakeholders across the defence ecosystem and exploring pathways through which specialised technologies and industrial capabilities can be brought together.

One of the defining aspects of this approach is the importance placed on international cooperation. India's defence ambitions are increasingly connected to opportunities for knowledge exchange, technology partnerships and industrial collaboration with trusted international counterparts. Sahil recognises that developing a stronger domestic ecosystem can involve learning from established capabilities while creating opportunities for Indian industry to participate more actively in the value chain.

VTDS's engagement with DEUS Automation a.s., a sister company of the STV Group ecosystem in the Czech Republic, reflects this outlook. The collaboration is focused on small-calibre ammunition technology and industrial cooperation, bringing together complementary interests in a strategically significant area. For Sahil, such partnerships represent an opportunity to explore how international expertise and Indian industrial ambitions can

work together within the broader framework of Make in India.

The significance of these engagements extends beyond an individual business relationship. They form part of a wider conversation about India's place in global defence supply chains and the role that responsible industrial partnerships can play in strengthening domestic capabilities. Sahil's emphasis on collaboration reflects an understanding that meaningful progress in this sector depends on sustained engagement, clearly defined objectives and respect for the technical and regulatory frameworks governing the industry.

His vision also aligns with the larger national emphasis on Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Indigenous capability is not simply a question of domestic production; it encompasses the development of technical knowledge, industrial capacity, dependable partnerships and the ability to participate in increasingly sophisticated manufacturing ecosystems. Through VTDS, Sahil aspires to contribute to this broader ambition by building a platform that can pursue these opportunities responsibly and progressively.

The journey of a young enterprise in the defence sector also involves establishing credibility among stakeholders. Recognition from business platforms and participation in industry conversations can help emerging organisations communicate their ambitions and establish a presence within a competitive environment. Sahil's entrepreneurial journey has received attention through several business and leadership platforms, including Fortune India, Hello Entrepreneur and Business Outreach.

He has also received recognition for his contribution to conversations around Indian entrepreneurship and defence leadership. Among these distinctions are the Visionary in Defence Leadership 2025 recognition at the House of Commons and the Atmanirbhar Bharat in Defence Manufacturing Award presented at the India News Manch. Such acknowledgements form part of his public professional journey, reflecting the growing visibility of his work and his engagement with the wider business community.

An especially meaningful dimension of his engagement with the sector has been the opportunity to discuss India's future defence industrial capacity with public representatives and policymakers. During the India News Manch, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini expressed interest in a proposal concerning a second small arms and ammunition facility and connected Sahil with his Principal Secretary for further engagement. The interaction highlighted the importance of continued dialogue between industry and government as India explores opportunities to strengthen its domestic defence ecosystem.



For Sahil, building a business in this environment also means recognising that credibility is developed over time. Regulatory compliance, transparent engagement, reliable partnerships and a clear understanding of the organisation's capabilities are essential to establishing a durable institutional presence. The emphasis remains on developing the right foundations, identifying suitable opportunities and pursuing growth in a manner consistent with the responsibilities of the sector.

Behind this professional journey is also a shared entrepreneurial commitment. Alongside Co-Founder and Director Prikansha Luthra, Sahil is helping shape the organisation's direction and build a business with ambitions extending beyond its immediate stage of development. Their complementary leadership brings together strategic direction and organisational stewardship, allowing VTDS to approach its growth with a broader perspective.

As India continues to strengthen its defence manufacturing ambitions, the opportunities for emerging enterprises will depend on their ability to combine vision with execution. For Sahil, the challenge is to translate an entrepreneurial idea into an organisation capable of participating in this long-term transformation. It is a journey that calls for persistence, disciplined decision-making and a willingness to build steadily in a sector where credibility cannot be separated from responsibility.

His ambition for VTDS is ultimately connected to a larger national aspiration: an India with stronger indigenous industrial capabilities, meaningful technology partnerships and a more developed domestic defence ecosystem. By working towards these objectives, Sahil Luthra is seeking to establish a place for VTDS within a sector that will remain important to India's industrial and strategic future. ●

Gerua to Growth

Empowering Youth, Inspiring Enterprise, Building the Nation



RiseNation Foundation (Section 8 NGO) will organise Viksit Banga to Viksit Bharat 2047 in Kolkata from 9–12 January 2027, bringing together Ministers, Govt Officials, industry leaders, policymakers, youth representatives, entrepreneurs and development stakeholders to explore opportunities for youth empowerment, enterprise development and nation-building.

The initiative aims to connect Vivekananda's ideals of courage, character, service and leadership with the aspirations of Gen Z and the vision of a developed India by 2047. With a focus on West Bengal's potential, the programme seeks to promote skill development, entrepreneurship, sustainable livelihoods and collaboration between young people, businesses and institutions.

Key Highlights

1. Gerua Walk – Inspired by Modi's Vision

The Gerua Walk will symbolise the connection between Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of youth awakening and Honb PM Narendra Modi's vision of national development. The initiative seeks to inspire young people to embrace discipline, leadership, innovation and civic responsibility, translating the spirit of Gerua to Growth into a contemporary movement for nation-building.

2. Youth, Enterprise and Development Summit

The summit will encourage dialogue and networking among entrepreneurs, industry representatives, policymakers and youth participants. Discussions will focus on employability, emerging business opportunities, innovation, skill development and sustainable growth

3. Viksit Bharat Anthem Launch

The launch of the Viksit Bharat Anthem will celebrate the aspirations of a progressive, self-reliant and developed India. The anthem is envisioned as an expression of collective ambition, national unity and the responsibility of citizens, particularly young people, in shaping India's future.

4. Banga Vision Magazine Cover Launch

The launch of Banga Vision magazine will provide a platform to showcase Bengal's development priorities, cultural heritage, entrepreneurial potential and contribution to India's economic and social progress. The publication will seek to highlight ideas, initiatives and opportunities relevant to Bengal's future.

5.Cultural and Nation Building Activities

Expected Outcomes

The initiative aims to increase awareness of skill-development and entrepreneurial opportunities, encourage youth-led enterprises, facilitate potential partnerships between businesses and institutions, and identify avenues for sustainable livelihoods. It also seeks to strengthen Bengal's visibility as a contributor to national development while encouraging young people to participate actively in the journey towards Viksit Bharat 2047.

Through this initiative, RiseNation Foundation seeks to build a platform where Vivekananda's timeless vision meets Gen Z's innovative spirit, transforming inspiration into enterprise and collective aspiration into meaningful action.

Our Social-Development-Commitment

Beyond the three-day programme, RiseNation Foundation proposes to develop a structured youth empowerment and sustainable-livelihood initiative across West Bengal, subject to partnerships and funding.

Our priorities include:

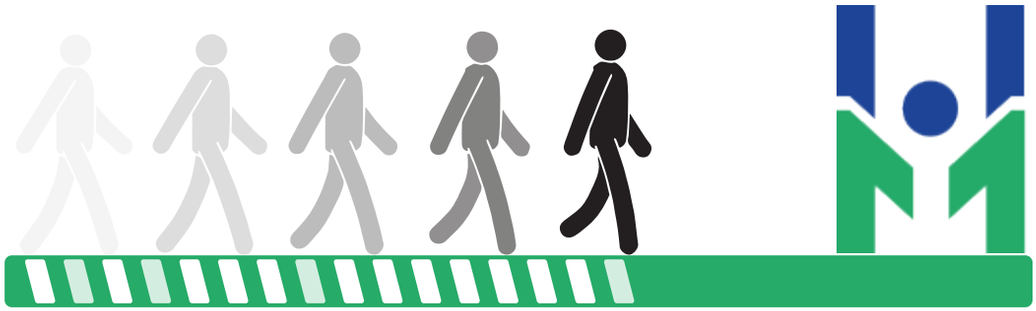
Vocational training, digital readiness and career guidance.
Employment, apprenticeship and self-employment linkages.
Youth entrepreneurship and MSME engagement.
Women's economic participation and inclusive opportunities.
Collaboration with eligible government programmes, CSR partners, training institutions and employers.
Monitoring and reporting against agreed beneficiary and outcome indicators.●

Programme schedule is subject to change.

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