



## CELEBRATING THE 'SPIRIT OF DESIGN'

DESIGN INTELLIGENTSIA DISCUSS SMART BUILDING PRACTICES AT THE JAQUAR DESIGN CONFAB IN PUNE

BY SHRISTI NANGALIA

Leading bathroom and lighting solutions company Jaquar Group launched a forum — Design ConFab — to reflect upon 'Best practices for Smart, High-Performance Indian Buildings' in association with Architect & Interiors India magazine in Pune last month. Eminent personalities from the design, real estate and construction fraternities were invited to discuss the various challenges and issues that the industry is currently facing on this unique knowledge-sharing platform.

Speaking about the brand's focus on sustainable and smart design solutions in his welcome address, Mohit Hajela, group head, Business Development, Jaquar Group, also narrated the importance of India's architectural legacy: "Architecture in India has come a long way. Going back to the influences of period architecture with its stroke of brilliance in every form, the subcontinent stands blessed with a legacy that's a cynosure for all eyes; reflective of the nation's rich culture, tradition, provenance and pedigree."

Following a short video exhibiting Jaquar as a brand, Hajela opened the Design ConFab by introducing the keynote



1. Panel members: (L-R) Kalhan Mattoo, Ash Parekh, Manish Kumat, Ketan Jawdekar, Kalpak Bhandari, Pratap Jadhav, Sanjay Patil, Prashant Sutaria and Dev Malhotra.

2. Keynote speaker: Dikshu Kukreja.

### PANEL OF EXPERTS

**Dikshu Kukreja**, principal architect, CP Kukreja Architects  
**Ash Parekh**, principal architect, Opus D'Sign Studio  
**Manish Kumat**, founder and chief designer, Abhikalpan Architects  
**Ketan Jawdekar**, principal architect, Studio K-7 Designs  
**Kalpak Bhandari**, principal architect & partner, VEEKAS Studio  
**Pratap Jadhav**, principal architect, Pratap Jadhav & Associates  
**Sanjay Patil**, principal architect, Environ Planners  
**Prashant Sutaria**, principal architect, PSA  
**Dev Malhotra**, group advisor — Sales & Marketing, Jaquar Group

speaker for the evening — Dikshu Kukreja, principal architect, CP Kukreja Architects, one of the top 100 architecture firms in the world.

Kukreja took the opportunity to talk about 'the power of design' and its real meaning for architects. "I believe, we architects have the ultimate power; we can make sure that our designs are as powerful and iconic as they used to be in the ancient golden era," Kukreja emphasised. He presented some of the firm's state-of-the-art projects that were not just architecturally astounding, but also define India's infrastructural needs.

Parvez Amin, president, Sales & Marketing, Jaquar Group, felicitated Kukreja for his insightful speech and called on stage the next speaker who played a critical role in embodying the principles and ideals that the company stood for into the build-



ing housing its headquarters. Elaborating on its conceptual design and planning, Sudhir, senior associate architect, Gayathri & Namith Architects, shared a glimpse of the beautiful Jaquar building — a standing example and the symbol of what the company represents. In his presentation, Sudhir mentioned, "We went back to the age-old tradition of Tattva, Shastra and Vyavhara for development of our design. We were constantly inspired by sayings and practices of famous architects, including FL Wright, Zaha Hadid and more."

3. Sudhir, senior associate architect, Gayathri & Namith Architects, spoke about the conceptual design and planning of the building housing Jaquar's headquarters (HQ).

4. Rajesh Mehra, director & promoter, Jaquar Group, addresses the gathering after receiving the Platinum LEED Certification for the HQ.

5. Mohit Hajela from Jaquar Group talks about the Indian architectural legacy in his welcome address.

6. Anik Mehta, zonal head — West Zone, Jaquar Group, delivers the vote of thanks.



7&8. Congregation of architects and designers at the Jaquar Design ConFab.

On the occasion, Aalok Vinod Jhunjhunwala, international marketing manager at GBCI, and Padmanabh Subramaniam, regional manager – market development at GBCI, awarded Rajesh Mehra, director & promoter, Jaquar Group, with the Platinum LEED Certification for the head office building. It is under Mehra's leadership and direction that Jaquar Group today is an undisputed leader in the branded bath fittings market in India with over 60% market share. Mehra delivered his vote of thanks, and shared his experiences and highpoints of the journey while accepting the certification, and anticipated a greater success for the brand in the coming years.

Kick-starting the most awaited session of the evening – the panel discussion – Kalhan Mattoo, principal architect & partner, Planet 3 Studios, moderated the session with an aim of extracting as much wisdom from the accomplished speakers of the panel as possible.

Mattoo asked Sanjay Patil, principal architect, Environ Planners, to give his views on smart buildings, performance and the Indian scenario. "'Smart' is a relative term in design," opined Patil. "Every design, be it a building or a city as a whole, in my opinion, should be smart and sustainable."

When Pratap Jadhav, principal architect, Pratap Jadhav & Associates, was invited to give his views on why going 'smart' was an imposition when it ought to be the basis of every design, he rightly stated, "It is true that going smart should be a fundamental criterion, but I feel these are fashion words that have come in now. Conserving energy has been our basic nature, even before the influx of technology." Ketan Jawdekar,

principal architect, Studio K-7, added, "I, particularly, do not understand the meaning of smartness in today's scenario. While designing, I make sure I adhere to my basic instinct, the local context and the brief."

Being the only non-architect on the panel, Dev Malhotra, group advisor – Sales & Marketing, Jaquar Group, shared his views as a user by saying, "The customer is looking for an experience. How this experience can be enhanced through smart architecture and smart interiors, matters." Prashant Sutaria, principal architect, PSA, took it forward saying, "A smart performing building may mean different things to different people. For me, it is about the use of equipments in a space that lets the user interact better and lets the controller derive information of the entire building system. Above all, I try to incorporate smart technology only if it enhances the design." Agreeing to Sutaria's remarks, Kalpak Bhandari, principal architect & partner, VEEKAS Studio, suggested: "Architects should be judicious enough to adapt to technology that adds value to the need and design of the project."

When asked about the tool to measure the performance of the building, Ash Parekh, principal architect, Opus D'Sign Studio, stated, "The end users' responses are our performance-measuring tool." On the other hand, Manish Kumar, founder and chief designer, Abhikalpan, spoke about a non-humanistic, non-abstract way of measuring performance. "Technology itself can be an enabler here," he said. "We can derive exact numbers by establishing tools and meters running on technology."

Many delegates and dignitaries from the audience actively participated in the open discussion to create a meaningful dialogue with the enthusiastic panelists. A hearty exchange of thoughts, expressions and ideas marked the end of a thought-provoking and insightful panel session that concluded with a night of networking amongst the fraternity.

Towards the close of the event, Anik Mehta (zonal head – West Zone), Umesh Yadav and Mohit Hajela of Jaquar Group thanked and felicitated the panelists. Mehta, on behalf of the organisers, gave a vote of thanks by acknowledging the keynote speaker, panel members, attendees from GBCI and GNA, design fraternity invitees, team Jaquar of Pune, ITP Media, knowledge partners and the media for making the Design ConFab successful and special. Cocktails and dinner concluded the insightful evening. **AS&I**