NEW VISTAS

FAÇADES ARE AN IMPORTANT ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT THAT GIVES A BUILT SPACE ITS IDENTITY AND LOOK, WHICH MAKES THEM A VITAL DESIGN ELEMENT – ESPECIALLY THE LATEST ONES ON OFFER

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

1. A façade by Span Floors.

2. Ozone Designs' façade work for the Noor Mahal Karnal.

3. The Rainforest project by Pentaspace Design Studio.

Façades are the most important building element from both users and architects' point of view. Designers are constantly researching and experimenting with new kinds of façades using different materials like rusted iron panels, copper, even high-pressure laminates, wood and wood finishes.

"The new age innovation in façades revolve around users' comfort, along with being energy efficient. The use of sustainable and eco-friendly material is finding a market in demand for itself in the façades industry," says Saurabh Sood, founder of Nature Homes.

Häfele offers a specially-engineered range of ultra-compact slabs from Dekton (Spain) that can be used for exterior applications like wall cladding. Vikas Pandita, product


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manager, Surfaces and Water Solutions, Häfele India, avers, "The material is impervious and does not allow moisture to settle on the walls, resisting the development of agents like fungus. It also helps in conservation of energy as the external heat is not easily transferred to the insides of the building and vice versa."

In the past, the façade methodology remained complementary to the structural systems, along with other factors like climate and aesthetical preferences. "With the inception of framed structures, precast and prefabricated façades are going to define future façades, and we are sure that prefabrication and modularisation strategies are being adopted," says Anu Prabhakar, principal architect/ VP, Housejoy.

DO THE NEW

Façades are the most difficult to design too, since the perception of iconic and technologically advanced façades is changing frequently. Architects and engineers are researching and experimenting with new and complex façade forms and patterns. "A good façade design turns any building or structure into sculpture, which elevates the aesthetic senses of human beings. For that, a good design needs to be executed with utmost precision as well as good quality of material and workmanship," state Gaurav Sanghavi and Harsh Pote, co-founders, Pentaspace Design Studio.

Automated façade skins, geometric designs, self-shading screens and vegetation facades are pushing the limits of design perception; creating rich, innovative spatial experiences through both physical and digital interventions. Deepak Kalra, principal partner, RMDK, opines, "There has been a re-emergence of blending the form and function within the façade, instead of them being merely aesthetic skins. Depending on the scale of the project, the new façades also aim at bringing the inside in, through a usage of materials like wood and glass."

Piyush Srivastava, national façade manager, Schueco India, opines, "There have been numerous fast-paced developments in the façade industry, especially in the west, and they are gradually being adapted into the Indian scenario to


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PHOTOGRAPH: FERNANDO ALDA

4. Gaurav Sanghavi, co-founder, Pentaspace Design Studio.

5. Harsh Pote, co-founder, Pentaspace Design Studio.

6. Anu Prabhakar, principal architect/ VP, Housejoy.

7. Deepak Kalra, principal partner, RMDK.

8. Imran Shaikh, architect and director, Cubix Architects Associates.

9. Dekton by Häfele.

suit local needs. Energy conservation is an important subject owing to the climatic conditions which led to the design and integration of high-performance façades with credible wind resistance and water tightness certification."

TECH TALK

Technology has helped the façades industry develop and work on innovative ideas, making façades that cool, heat and neutralise the building. The technology in play also allows the building to become energy-efficient and have a positive impact on the CO2 balance.

Ashwani Khanna, AVP - Marketing, FunderMax, explains, "Rear Ventilated Façade Systems by FunderMax are contemporary and technologically-advanced cladding systems. These smart systems are mainly used for optimising temperature levels inside a building, thereby increasing occupant comfort. During monsoons, this sustainable façade system drains the rain water away from the walls." Tools like Virtual Reality, 3D modelling and printing, prefabrication and parametrics are enabling architects to achieve new levels of attention to detail and offering better execution opportunities and methodologies.

Shankho Chowdhury, president, Decoratives Division, CenturyPly, says, "New research on nano materials and smart composites imitating natural structures and processes are trialed almost every day within the technologies. In the architectural field, especially in building cladding, only a trivial amount of such advanced technologies has settled."

TREND CHECK

Dynamic tinting electrochromic glass is a game changer in the industry. It gives the end-user the benefit of using a glazed façade without using blinds that obstruct the exterior and daylight. Tushar Joshi, principal interior designer, Ozone Designs, says, "Dynamic (Kinetic) façades which


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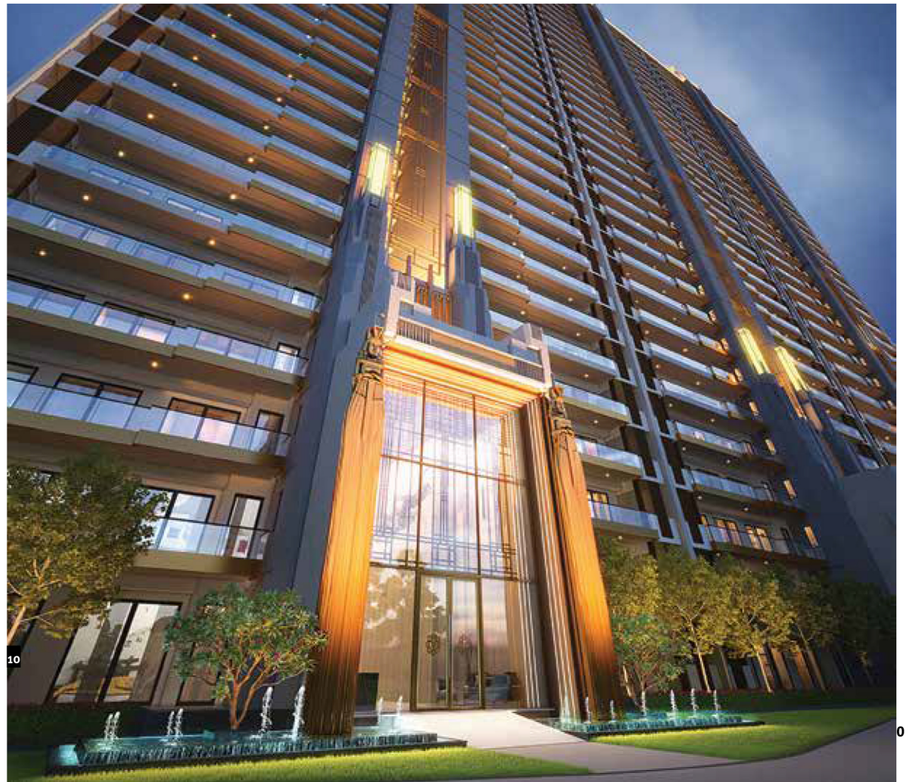
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10. Residential façade for Gulshan Dynasty.

11. Greenlam's exterior grade laminates.

13. Parul Mittal, director, Greenlam Industries.

14. Subhendu Ganguly, MD, AluK India.