{ ISSUE 01 }
MAY 2026
Reimagining the City...

# Legend

MUMBAI | Price 250/- • Pages 84

Building Brand

**ARUSHI ASHAR -Director AJAY ASHAR GROUP**

DEVELOPER'S DIARY

**MR JEET ADANI**
**Director Adani Airport Holding Pvt Ltd**

COVER STORY

**MMRDA's Davos Triumph USD 96B Secured in One Day**

Innovation Focus
The Analysis

**NIKHIL KAMATH & HIS HUMOUR**

Exclusive Interview

**Dr. Sanjay Mukherjee, IAS**

MAY EDITION 2026

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THE MAGAZINE OF EXTRAORDINARY STORIES

# LEGEND

Excellence · Culture · Vision

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# EDITORIAL

# Why Now Matters More Than Ever

ON THE COURAGE TO BUILD, THE DISCIPLINE TO ENDURE, AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BEARING WITNESS TO INDIA'S MOST CONSEQUENTIAL MOMENT.

Welcome. You are holding the first edition of Legend — and I want you to understand exactly why that word was chosen. Not as hyperbole. Not as aspiration dressed in borrowed confidence. But as a deliberate statement of intent about the kind of business journalism India deserves, and the kind of leaders this country is quietly, persistently producing.

We launched this magazine because something is happening in India's boardrooms, its development authorities, its family conglomerates, and its emerging enterprises that is not being told with sufficient rigour or ambition. The headline numbers are reported. The deals are announced. But the architecture of decision-making behind them — the reasoning, the risk, the relationships — largely goes undocumented. That gap is what Legend exists to close.

In this inaugural edition, you will read about Mumbai's extraordinary moment at Davos 2026 — USD 96 billion in investment commitments secured in a single day, more than double the previous year's record. You will read about the civil servant at the centre of it: a man who has done something genuinely rare, which is to transform a government infrastructure agency into a platform credible enough to sit across the table from sovereign investors and global universities. That story is one of institutional leadership. It is also a story about what India is capable of when execution matches ambition.

You will also meet the next generation inheriting India's great enterprises — and discovering, with admirable clarity, that inheritance is not stewardship. It is reinvention. The question of how Indian business families navigate generational transition is one of the defining strategic challenges of this decade. We intend to cover it without sentiment.

Legend will not chase the loudest voices in the room. We will seek out the quiet architects — the individuals whose work compounds slowly and whose judgment will determine the shape of the economy that the next generation inhabits. Every story in these pages is an argument for paying closer attention to the people and institutions that deserve it most.

India is not waiting. Neither are we.

**We will not chase the loudest voices in the room. We will seek out the quiet architects whose work shapes the economy the next generation inhabits.**

# CONTENT

COVER STORY

# MUMBAI RISING

How MMRDA brought the world to Mumbai's doorstep and secured USD 96 billion in a single day at Davos 2026.

**BY MMR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY SPECIAL FEATURE**

USD **96B** Total Investment Committed

**10** MoUs Signed

**9.6L** Jobs Projected

**2X** vs. Davos 2025 (USD 40B)

March-2026

**WHEN DAVOS TALKS, MARKETS LISTEN. BUT AT THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM'S ANNUAL MEETING IN JANUARY 2026, IT WAS MUMBAI THAT DID THE TALKING AND THE WORLD LEANED IN.**

In the span of a single high-stakes day in the Swiss Alps, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) secured USD 96 billion in confirmed investment commitments. Ten transformative Memoranda of Understanding were signed. An estimated 9.6 lakh jobs were projected. And a message was transmitted to every boardroom from Singapore to San Francisco: India's financial capital is no longer waiting for the world to arrive. It is going out to meet it.

## THE ARCHITECT BEHIND THE NUMBERS

At the centre of this moment was Dr. Sanjay Mukherjee, IAS, Metropolitan Commissioner of MMRDA. Quietly methodical and relentlessly strategic, Dr. Mukherjee has spent years doing something that few public administrators achieve: transforming a government infrastructure agency into something resembling a world-class development institution. At Davos 2026, that transformation was unmistakably on full display.

**Mumbai is not competing with cities it is collaborating with the world.**

**- Dr. Sanjay Mukherjee,** IAS, Metropolitan Commissioner, MMRDA

The numbers alone are striking. The USD 96 billion figure more than doubles the USD 40 billion secured at Davos 2025 — itself a record at the time. But it is the composition of the commitments, and the speed with which they were assembled, that signals a more fundamental shift in how global capital views the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

## A PORTFOLIO BUILT FOR SCALE

The anchor commitment came from SBG Group, which pledged USD 45 billion toward next-generation logistics infrastructure and digital ecosystems across the MMR. Panchshil Realty followed with USD 25 billion earmarked for integrated fintech districts and mixed-use urban development that will reshape the region's skyline. K Raheja Corp signed a USD 10 billion agreement to develop three Innovation Cities anchored in artificial intelligence, financial technology, and interactive gaming.

These three commitments alone account for USD 80 billion — more than twice the total secured at the previous year's summit. The remaining USD 16 billion represents a deliberately diversified basket of partnerships spanning global institutions, sovereign entities, and knowledge organisations.

| PARTNER | COMMITMENT (USD) | FOCUS AREA |
|---|---|---|
| SBG Group | USD 45 Billion | Next-Gen Logistics & Digital Infrastructure |
| Panchshil Realty | USD 25 Billion | Fintech Districts & Mixed-Use Urban Development |
| K Raheja Corp | USD 10 Billion | 3 Innovation Cities: AI, FinTech, Gaming |
| Sembcorp (SG) | Undisclosed | Green Industrial Ecosystems |
| Sumitomo Realty | Undisclosed | Bandra Kurla Complex Mobility & Retail |
| JICA (Japan) | Undisclosed | Digital Twin Integrated Transport Network |
| UC Berkeley | Undisclosed | Research & Innovation Corridor |
| TU Munich | Undisclosed | European Innovation Framework |
| IISM Global | Undisclosed | Global Sports City |
| Additional MoUs | Undisclosed | Diversified Sectors |

What unites these agreements is not merely their scale, but their strategic coherence. Each partnership reflects a deliberate thesis articulated by Dr. Mukherjee himself: that Mumbai's path to global relevance runs not through competition with other metropolitan centres, but through deep, structured collaboration with them.





LEADERSHIP PROFILE

# THE DIPLOMAT IN THE ROOM

### Dr. Sanjay Mukherjee, IAS how a civil servant became the architect of Mumbai's most ambitious global pivot.

**ANALYSIS** | **CORPORATE & INVESTOR FEATURE**

There is a particular kind of institutional leader that emerging markets periodically produce — one who understands the internal grammar of public administration as fluently as the external language of global capital. Dr. Sanjay Mukherjee, Metropolitan Commissioner of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, is that rare figure.

His achievement at Davos 2026 was not simply about signing ten agreements or generating a headline number. It was about repositioning a government agency — MMRDA, an authority historically associated with road construction and land development — as a credible, sophisticated counterpart to the world's leading sovereign investors, development banks, and technology corporations.

## FROM INFRASTRUCTURE AGENCY TO DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM

MMRDA was established to fulfil a specific mandate: plan and execute infrastructure across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. For much of its history, it did precisely that — roads, bridges, metro corridors, reclamation projects. Necessary, consequential, but largely invisible to the international investor community.

Under Dr. Mukherjee's stewardship, the authority's remit has expanded in practice, if not in statute. MMRDA has increasingly functioned as a platform — one that coordinates land, regulation, incentives, and execution capacity to attract not just capital, but the right kind of capital: patient, long-term, and aligned with the region's structural development needs.

The Davos numbers are the most visible evidence of this shift. But the groundwork was laid over years of institutional reform, project delivery, and — critically — the cultivation of credibility with international partners who had historically been sceptical of the Indian public sector's ability to execute at scale.

**Each partnership we sign is an investment in innovation, sustainability, and people.**

**- Dr. Sanjay Mukherjee,** IAS, Metropolitan Commissioner, MMRDA

**USD 45B**
SBG Group Largest Single Commitment

**3**
Innovation Cities Planned (K Raheja)

**2**
Global Universities Partnered

**2026**
Projected Execution Launch Year

## THE LANGUAGE OF GLOBAL CAPITAL

What distinguishes Dr. Mukherjee's approach at Davos — and in the broader negotiation process that preceded it — is a bilingual fluency that is genuinely uncommon in Indian public life. He speaks the language of infrastructure delivery: timelines, right-of-way acquisition, regulatory clearances, project finance structures. And he speaks the language of global institutional investors: ESG frameworks, workforce pipelines, innovation ecosystems, urban resilience.

This dual fluency matters enormously in the context of large-scale investment negotiations. Partners like Japan's JICA, Singapore's Sembcorp, and institutions from the European university system are not simply writing cheques. They are making long-duration bets on governance quality, institutional stability, and execution reliability. That they signed is itself a signal.

The scale of the commitment from UC Berkeley and the Technical University of Munich is particularly notable. Academic institutions do not sign development agreements for diplomatic reasons alone. Their participation reflects a genuine assessment that the MMR is building the human capital infrastructure — research corridors, innovation clusters, talent pipelines — that justifies sustained engagement.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUMITOMO AND BKC

Among the ten MoUs, the Sumitomo Realty agreement warrants particular attention from investors tracking Mumbai's commercial real estate trajectory. Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) is already the most expensive and sought-after commercial district in India. A Sumitomo-led repositioning of BKC as a world-class mobility and retail destination would represent a step-change in the district's global standing — with material implications for land values, rental yields, and the broader ecosystem of financial services firms anchored there.

Similarly, IISM Global's vision for a Global Sports City speaks to an asset class that has attracted significant sovereign and institutional capital globally — one that the MMR has not previously been positioned to capture. The economic multipliers from sports infrastructure, hospitality, media, and event management are well-documented. MMRDA's willingness to pursue this category signals an expanding conception of what the metropolitan region can and should be.



## A CIVIL SERVANT IN THE GLOBAL ARENA

Dr. Mukherjee's profile at Davos is emblematic of a broader shift in how India's most capable public administrators are being deployed. The era of the bureaucrat as rule-enforcer and file-processor is giving way — in pockets, and unevenly — to a new model: the institutional leader who combines policy expertise with strategic vision and the interpersonal credibility to negotiate at the highest levels of global business. It is the kind of leadership that India's next chapter of growth will require. Not simply at the national level  in ministries and the offices of secretaries — but at the city and regional level, where the actual work of urban transformation must happen. Davos 2026 offered a glimpse of what that looks like when it works.

**CITY FOCUS | MUMBAI METROPOLITAN REGION**

# A CITY BEING REINVENTED

### USD 96 BILLION IN COMMITMENTS. 21 MILLION PEOPLE. AND A DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK DESIGNED TO ENSURE GROWTH REACHES ALL OF THEM.

**URBAN INVESTMENT & POLICY REVIEW**

Mumbai is India's most consequential city. It generates a disproportionate share of national tax revenues, processes the majority of India's container trade, and houses the country's most sophisticated capital markets. For decades, it has also carried the weight of its own contradictions: extraordinary wealth alongside entrenched poverty; world-class financial infrastructure alongside crumbling roads and an overburdened rail network; global ambition constrained by fragmented governance across too many bodies to move with coherence.

The Davos 2026 commitments suggest that this picture is changing — not through a single intervention, but through a strategic accumulation of partnerships that, taken together, constitute a comprehensive reinvention of what the Mumbai Metropolitan Region can be.

## WHY GLOBAL INVESTORS ARE TAKING NOTICE

The ten MoUs signed at Davos are not speculative. Institutions like Sumitomo Realty, Sembcorp, and JICA conduct rigorous due diligence before committing. Their engagement with MMRDA signals a specific conclusion: that the authority has the institutional capacity to execute, the regulatory environment to protect investments, and the political backing to see projects through. That conclusion, reached independently by organisations from three different continents, is itself significant.

The digital twin technology that JICA will help deploy is particularly consequential for the region's transport future. Mumbai's rail and road networks are among the most heavily utilised in the world — and among the most poorly integrated. A functional digital twin of the metropolitan transport system would allow planners to model interventions in real time, optimise traffic flows, and coordinate the phased expansion of the metro network with road and port infrastructure in ways that have never previously been possible.

Sembcorp's green industrial ecosystems commitment speaks to a different set of priorities: the alignment of industrial growth with ESG standards that international investors increasingly require. As global capital flows towards sustainability-compliant assets, the ability of the MMR to offer green-certified industrial land and infrastructure becomes a meaningful competitive advantage.

**Mumbai has always been India's city of ambition. What 2026 may well mark is the moment it became the world's.**

**- Mumbai Rising, 2026**

## THE EMPLOYMENT ARCHITECTURE

The projection of 9.6 lakh new jobs is not a single aggregate drawn from a single sector. It is the product of deliberate diversification across six distinct domains, each with its own workforce profile, skill requirements, and income potential. This diversification is not incidental. It reflects a deliberate policy choice embedded in the architecture of each MoU — one that ensures the region's growth does not concentrate wealth in too few hands or too few sectors. Finance and technology will generate high-value employment. Logistics and clean energy will create scale employment. Hospitality and sports will generate the kind of visible, city-wide economic activity that benefits communities far beyond the immediate project footprint.

| PARTNER | COMMITMENT (USD) | FOCUS AREA |
|---|---|---|
| Finance & FinTech | Panchshil, K Raheja | High-skill; drives banking, payments, insurtech talent |
| AI & Technology | K Raheja, UC Berkeley | Research, product, and engineering roles |
| Logistics | SBG Group | Blue-collar to mid-skill; port-adjacent workforce |
| Clean Energy | Sembcorp | Green collar; technicians & project managers |
| Hospitality & Sports | IISM Global | Broad employment; from operations to management |
| Real Estate & Retail | Sumitomo, Panchshil | Construction to long-term commercial operations |




## INFRASTRUCTURE AS CIVIC IDENTITY

Perhaps the most significant dimension of MMRDA's Davos agenda is what it implies about the relationship between infrastructure investment and civic identity. The agreements are not simply about building roads, towers, or tech parks. They embed commitments to human capital development, research collaboration, ESG compliance, and workforce pipeline creation into the foundational architecture of each deal.

The Innovation Cities proposed by K Raheja Corp will not simply be commercial real estate developments. They will be anchored by research institutions, linked to global university networks, and designed to produce the kind of knowledge-intensive employment that allows cities to upgrade their economic complexity over time. The research corridors connecting MMR to Silicon Valley and European innovation frameworks will, if executed well, position Mumbai not as a destination for outsourced work, but as a node in the global innovation network.

This is where MMRDA's vision, as articulated by Dr. Mukherjee, diverges most meaningfully from conventional infrastructure thinking. The goal is not simply to build a better city. The goal is to build a city that builds better citizens — one equipped to participate in, and benefit from, the global economy it is increasingly integrated with.

## WHAT COMES NEXT

The commitments secured at Davos 2026 are, by their nature, forward-looking. MoUs establish intent and framework; execution is where the real test lies. For investors tracking MMR's trajectory, the key indicators to watch will be: speed of regulatory clearance for announced projects, pace of land acquisition and handover, quality of the institutional frameworks governing each partnership, and the degree to which human capital development commitments are operationalised rather than left as aspirational statements.

The conditions for success exist. The institutional capacity has been demonstrated. The global partnerships are in place. What remains is the hardest part of any infrastructure programme: sustained, disciplined execution over years and decades.

Mumbai has always been a city that absorbs ambition and channels it into something larger than the sum of its parts. The USD 96 billion committed at Davos 2026 is the largest single expression of external confidence in that capacity in the city's history. The question now is what Mumbai will build with it — and for whom.

# A NEW GROWTH CENTRE TAKES SHAPE BEYOND MUMBAI'S EDGE

MAHARASHTRA ANNOUNCES RAIGAD PEN GROWTH CENTRE AS THE FIRST GROWTH CENTRE PROJECT IN THIRD MUMBAI. WHICH IS IS DESIGNED TO ABSORB THE OVERFLOW OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST CONGESTED METROS.


At the World Economic Forum 2026 in Davos, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis unveiled the Raigad Pen Growth Centre a new business and residential district in Pen taluka, roughly 15–20 km from the New Navi Mumbai International Airport. The announcement was accompanied by MoUs valued at approximately ₹1 lakh crore.

The district is conceived along the lines of BKC, targeting global capability centres, fintech ecosystems, and walk-to-work infrastructure. Technical partnerships were signed with institutions including ANSR, Surbana Jurong of Singapore and Hanwha Group, South Korea

### Seamless Access, Strategic Advantage

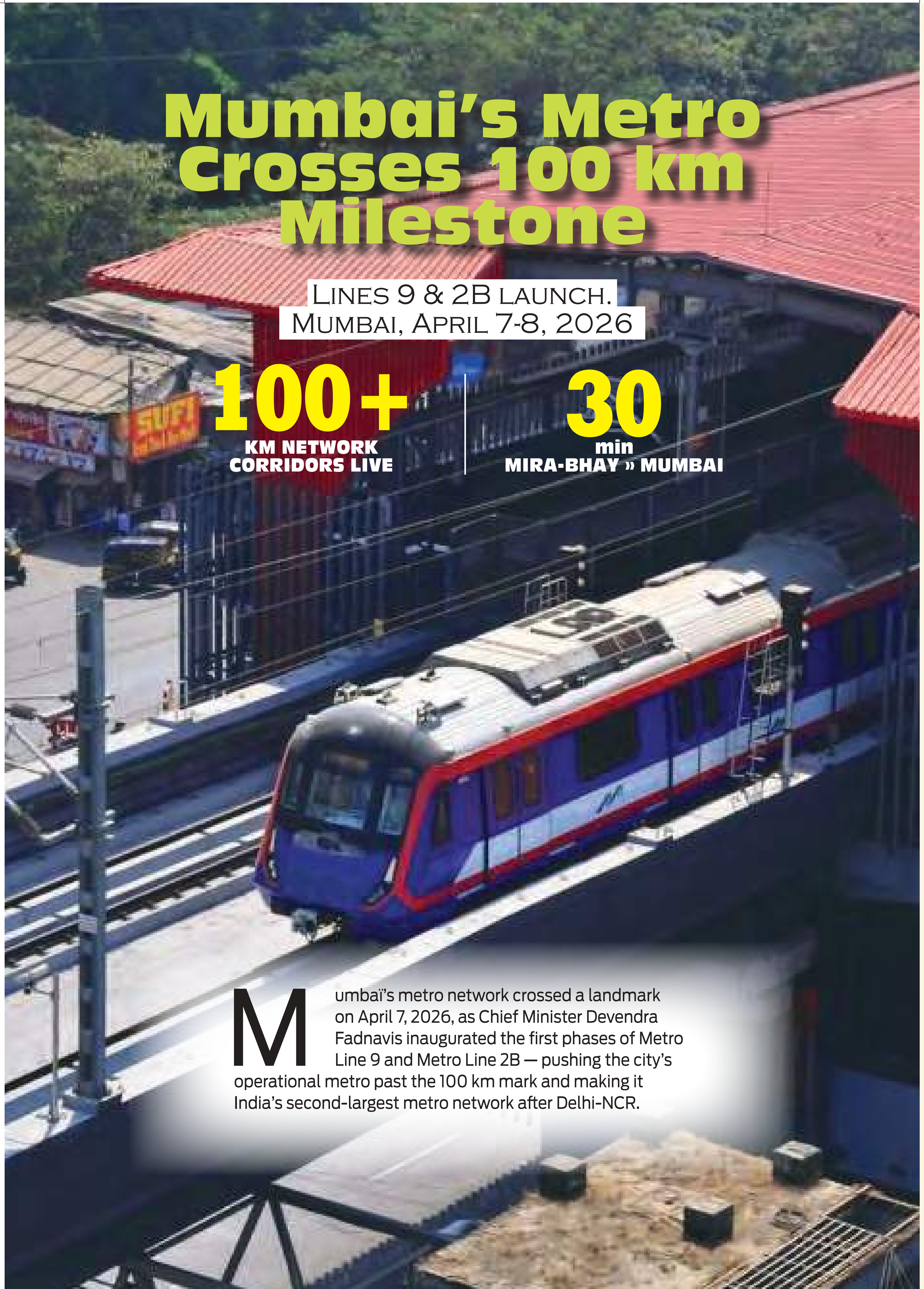
- Seamless Connectivity to South Mumbai, ensuring direct access to the city's primary business and financial districts.
- Proximity to Navi Mumbai International Airport, located just 35 minutes away, enhancing global connectivity.
- Rapid Access to Key Business Hubs, with Marine Drive, Worli, and BKC reachable within 30–35 minutes.

**The Raigad-Pen Growth Centre would become the first smart city in the Third Mumbai.**

**- Chief Minister Shri Devendra Fadnavis, Davos 2026**

### Designing the Future: A Holistic Growth Centre for the Digital Age

- A dedicated Technology & Financial Services District, designed to attract fintech firms, global banks, and digital innovation companies, creating a strong financial ecosystem.
- A specialized Global Capability Centre (GCC) District, aimed at hosting multinational corporations' offshore centers, focusing on high-skill operations, analytics, and R&D.
- Future-Ready Data Centre Ecosystem, designed to support hyperscale cloud infrastructure, AI workloads, and enterprise data needs, with reliable power, high-speed connectivity, and proximity to key digital and financial hubs
- Well-developed Social Infrastructure and Ecosystem, including residential, retail, hospitality, education, and recreational spaces, ensuring a holistic live-work-play environment.



# Mumbai's Metro Crosses 100 km Milestone

Lines 9 & 2B launch.
Mumbai, April 7-8, 2026

**100+**
KM NETWORK CORRIDORS LIVE

**30** min
MIRA-BHAY » MUMBAI

Mumbai's metro network crossed a landmark on April 7, 2026, as Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the first phases of Metro Line 9 and Metro Line 2B — pushing the city's operational metro past the 100 km mark and making it India's second-largest metro network after Delhi-NCR.

# Vietnam's Vingroup Pledges $8.5 Billion for Maharashtra's Future

In one of the largest Vietnam—India investment collaborations ever, the Hanoi-based conglomerate signs a landmark MoU to build smart cities, green mobility, and world-class social infrastructure across Mumbai and Raigad.

Maharashtra is set to receive one of its largest-ever infusions of foreign capital as Vietnam's Vingroup — the country's biggest private conglomerate — commits approximately $8.5 billion (roughly 70,000 crore) to a sweeping portfolio of projects spanning smart townships, electric mobility, renewable energy, tourism, and social infrastructure over the next two years. The investment was formalised through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Vingroup, Maharashtra's Industries Department, and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Vietnam's Consul General was also present at the ceremony, underscoring the diplomatic weight of the occasio

NEXT-GENERATION LEADERSHIP

# THE QUIET ARCHITECT

JEET ADANI ISN'T INHERITING AN EMPIRE. HE'S REIMAGINING ONE. THE YOUNGEST SCION OF INDIA'S MOST AMBITIOUS CONGLOMERATE IS DOING SOMETHING FAR MORE COMPLEX THAN MANAGING LEGACY HE IS TRANSLATING IT INTO THE LANGUAGE OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

**BY ENTERPRISE INDIA EDITORIAL**

**Infrastructure is the silent language of progress. My goal is to ensure that language is spoken clearly, sustainably, and with an eye on the generations to follow.**

**- JEET ADANI**

### THE ADANI INHERITANCE

The Adani Group was built on scale ports, power, airports, coal, logistics. It is infrastructure in the most literal sense: the invisible skeleton that keeps a nation moving. That foundation was laid by his father Gautam Adani's generation, with a particular kind of hunger that comes from building something from nothing.

Jeet's inheritance is different. Educated at the University of Pennsylvania, shaped by a global, data-fluent worldview, he sits at the intersection of what the group has always been and what it must become. His lens is not the balance sheet alone it is the system behind the balance sheet. How information flows. How decisions are communicated. How a conglomerate of this scale stays coherent, transparent, and relevant in an era where trust is as valuable as any physical asset.

Those who work alongside him describe a quality that surprises people expecting something else entirely — a quiet, almost academic curiosity. He listens more than he speaks. He asks more than he declares. In a world that rewards the loudest voice in the room, this is, in itself, a kind of strategic choice.

## BEYOND THE BOARDROOM

INFRASTRUCTURE, IDENTITY & THE HUMAN IN THE ARCHITECTURE

### THE HUMAN IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE

What distinguishes Jeet's thinking most sharply from a conventional heir's instincts is a firm conviction that infrastructure is not simply an economic category. It is, at its core, a social one. The roads that connect villages to hospitals, the ports that enable fishermen to reach global markets, the power grids that light rural homes — these are not merely industrial assets. They are relationships expressed in steel and concrete.

Whether working on digital innovation in logistics, capital markets strategy, or the group's broader narrative in a skeptical media environment, his instinct is consistently human-centric. He is less interested in the steel and concrete than in what the steel and concrete makes possible for the people living around it.

This is not idealism dressed up in corporate language. It is a practical recognition that the next chapter of Indian enterprise will be written by companies that understand their relationship with communities, not just markets. The scrutiny that modern conglomerates face — from regulators, journalists, and investors alike — demands a kind of institutional self-awareness that previous generations were rarely called upon to demonstrate.

### THE WIDE-ANGLE VIEW

Away from boardrooms and strategy sessions, Jeet flies. Literally — he is a licensed pilot, and those who know him well say the hobby is not incidental to who he is. Flying demands a particular combination of qualities: meticulous preparation, the ability to hold a wide-angle view while managing precise detail, and the composure to navigate uncertainty without losing sight of the destination.

It is, in many ways, a fair description of the role he has stepped into. The Adani Group operates across fourteen businesses in over fifty countries. Steering any part of that machine requires exactly the kind of mind that can zoom out far enough to see the whole, then zoom back in with surgical precision. Jeet appears to be developing that capability methodically, without fanfare.

# A LEGACY EVOLVING

## ON DIGITAL STRATEGY, INSTITUTIONAL TRUST, AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE FUTURE.

### DIGITAL FLUENCY AS COMPETITIVE MOAT

The role Jeet has been given Vice President of Group Editorial and Digital Strategy is not a ceremonial title for the founder's son. It is, at its heart, a question about what the Adani Group wants to say about itself, and how. In an era defined by information velocity, where a single poorly managed communication can reshape a company's valuation within hours, editorial and digital strategy sits at the core of institutional risk management.

Under Jeet's direction, there is a visible shift in how the group positions itself less defensive, more proactive. Greater emphasis on sustainability credentials, on data-backed narratives, on engaging with the financial community on its own terms rather than reacting to external pressure. It is a communications posture that reflects a generation shaped by global capital markets, ESG expectations, and the unforgiving transparency of the digital public square.

Peers who have worked alongside him speak of an approach that is unusually structured. He thinks in systems asking not just what a message is, but how it connects to a broader framework of institutional identity. It is the kind of thinking that, applied at scale, turns communications from a reactive function into a strategic asset.

### TRUST AS INFRASTRUCTURE

There is an argument to be made that Jeet has taken on the single most important challenge in the Adani Group's near-term future — not its ports or its power plants, but its credibility. The group has, in recent years, faced the kind of scrutiny that comes with being among the most visible corporate entities in a rapidly globalising India. Navigating that scrutiny requires precisely the combination of attributes that Jeet seems to be cultivating: patience, intellectual rigour, and a clear-eyed understanding of how institutions earn and maintain trust.

Trust, in modern enterprise, functions much like infrastructure itself. You rarely notice it when it is working. You notice it acutely when it fails. Building it requires consistent, unglamorous work over years — exactly the kind of effort that resists the short attention spans of quarterly reporting cycles. For a group operating at the scale of the Adani conglomerate, that long game is not optional. It is existential.



**The most interesting heirs are not the ones who preserve what was built before them. They are the ones who understand it deeply enough to know what needs to change.**

**- ENTERPRISE INDIA ANALYSIS**

# THE DIRECTION IS CLEAR

A PORTRAIT OF AMBITION, METHOD, AND THE LONG VIEW.

### WHAT COMES NEXT

Jeet Adani is still early in his journey. He would, one suspects, be the first to say so and that quality of measured self-awareness is itself a signal worth reading carefully. The most dangerous successors in business history have been the ones who arrived at the throne convinced they already understood everything. The most consequential ones have tended to begin with questions.

The direction, however, is clear toward a version of the Adani Group that is leaner in its communication, more transparent in its intent, more digitally fluent in its operations, and more consciously connected to the world it operates in. Not a departure from the legacy built by Gautam Adani's generation, but its next honest evolution. An empire remade, not merely received.

The Adani Group's story is not yet written. But if the quiet architect currently drawing its next blueprint has anything to do with it, the structure it describes will be built to last not just in steel and wire and revenue, but in the less tangible and more durable currency of reputation.

### ABOUT JEET ADANI

Jeet Adani serves as Vice President of Group Editorial and Digital Strategy at the Adani Group. He holds a degree from the University of Pennsylvania and is a licensed pilot. He is the youngest son of Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group, one of India's largest diversified conglomerates, operating across ports, energy, airports, logistics, agri-business, and defence, with a presence in over fifty countries.

# ADAPT OR DISAPPEAR

NIKHIL KAMATH DIDN'T FOLLOW THE RULES OF WEALTH. HE REWROTE THEM AND SOMEHOW MADE IT LOOK LIKE HE WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION. THE REAL TRICK? HE ABSOLUTELY WAS.

Nikhil Kamath will be the first to tell you he has no idea what he's doing. That, of course, is exactly what someone who knows precisely what they're doing would say. But with Nikhil, you get the sense he genuinely means it at least partly.

> **Most people in finance spend their careers learning rules that were written for a world that no longer exists.**
>
> **- NIKHIL KAMATH**

There is a refreshing absence of the rehearsed certainty that most billionaires perform for public consumption.

No origin myth polished to a shine. No carefully curated rags-to-riches arc delivered with practiced humility. Just a man who dropped out of school at sixteen, talked his way into a job he wasn't qualified for, and somehow ended up building one of India's most consequential financial empires before most people his age had figured out their LinkedIn profiles.

He finds this funny. That, perhaps more than anything else, is what makes Nikhil Kamath worth paying attention to

### THE CHESS PLAYER'S EDUCATION

The official biography reads like a provocation. Born in Bangalore in 1987, Nikhil abandoned formal education at sixteen to sell mobile phones. Not because he had a grand plan. Not because he saw the future of telecommunications or identified a market inefficiency. He left because school, by his own admission, simply didn't hold his attention the way a chessboard did.

Chess was his first obsession — and his first real teacher. The game is, at its core, about thinking several moves ahead while appearing completely calm in the present. It rewards pattern recognition, contrarian thinking, and the ability to hold multiple possible futures in your head simultaneously. It is, not coincidentally, an almost perfect description of what Nikhil does with money.

He began trading in the stock markets as a teenager, lost money with impressive consistency, learned from it with even more impressive consistency, and eventually co-founded Zerodha with his brother Nithin in 2010. The idea was straightforward enough to seem obvious in retrospect — which is the hallmark of all genuinely good ideas. Brokerage in India was expensive, opaque, and intimidating. Zerodha made it cheap, transparent, and accessible.

### THE UNFUNDABLE BILLIONAIRE

The result was a company that now handles a significant share of India's retail trading volume — built without a single rupee of outside funding. No venture capital. No institutional investors. No glossy funding round press releases. Just two brothers, a clear idea, and the discipline to execute it without giving away the shop.

In an era where startup valuations are announced like sports scores and funding rounds are celebrated like victories in themselves, Zerodha's bootstrapped journey is almost countercultural. Nikhil is aware of the irony — a fintech billionaire who never raised external funding, in an industry built on the movement of other people's money.





He doesn't romanticize it, but he doesn't downplay it either. The decision was not born of ideology. It was born of a simple, almost stubborn logic: if the business can sustain itself, why dilute it? Why answer to someone else's timeline, someone else's growth targets, someone else's definition of success?

This is the thread that runs through everything Nikhil touches. A quiet refusal to accept the default setting. Not rebelliousness for its own sake — he is far too pragmatic for that — but a genuine, considered skepticism of received wisdom.

### THE NUMBER THAT MATTERS MOST

What is Zerodha worth? The honest answer, by Nikhil's own framing, is: it doesn't particularly matter. The metric he returns to is not valuation but durability. Will the business exist in twenty years? Will it have served its users well? Those questions interest him more than the ones that show up on Bloomberg terminals.

It's a position that sounds like humility until you realize it's actually strategy. Companies obsessed with valuation make decisions that optimize for valuation. Companies obsessed with durability make decisions that outlast cycles. Zerodha, for all its fintech credentials, has always behaved more like the latter.

That orientation — toward the long game, away from quarterly performance theatre — may be the most countercultural thing about a man who has made a career out of ignoring what everyone else is doing.

# THE PHILOSOPHICAL TRADER

## On doubt, curiosity, the luck he can't stop talking about, and why India's most interesting billionaire might be the one most willing to ask if he deserves to be one.

**ANALYSIS** | **CONTRARIAN MAGAZINE** | **THE MIND BEHIND THE MONEY**

### THE PROBLEM WITH CERTAINTY

There is a particular performance that wealth demands of those who hold it. Confidence. Projection. The unblinking conviction that you saw what others missed, did what others wouldn't, and arrived exactly where you intended to. Markets reward this theatre. Investors need to believe in someone who believes in themselves.

Nikhil Kamath seems constitutionally incapable of putting on that show.

He operates, instead, from a position of what you might call structured uncertainty — always aware of what he doesn't know, always building in room for being wrong, always willing to say out loud that the gap between skill and luck is much narrower than the biography suggests. It is a

**Whether luck or skill deserved more credit whether survivorship bias had simply smiled on him these are not rhetorical questions for Nikhil. He genuinely isn't sure.**

**- CONTRARIAN ANALYSIS**

sophisticated epistemic position, and one that most people take decades of painful lessons to arrive at, if they arrive at all. Nikhil appears to have gotten there early. Possibly because he lost money early, and learned very quickly that the market has absolutely no interest in your confidence levels.

## WTF IS GOING ON AND HE MEANS IT

His podcast WTF is with Nikhil Kamath has become one of India's most-listened business and ideas shows. Not because it stays safely within the lanes of finance, but precisely because it doesn't. He has sat across from Ratan Tata and stand-up comedians, from economists and athletes, from philosophers and startup founders, and approached each with the same quality: genuine, unperformed curiosity.

The show works because Nikhil is not performing interest. He is interested. That sounds like a small thing until you watch enough hours of business media to realize how vanishingly rare it actually is.

He once spent an entire episode interrogating the premise of his own success. Whether luck or skill deserved more credit. Whether survivorship bias had simply smiled on him. Whether anyone, himself included, truly knew the difference. By any conventional measure, it was a terrible thing for a billionaire to say on a public platform.

His listeners loved him for it. Because it sounded like the thing everyone secretly suspects but almost nobody in that position ever says.

## TRUE NORTH BETTING ON PEOPLE, NOT PITCHES

If Zerodha was about democratizing markets, True North — his venture capital and investment platform — is about something more personal. It is, at its heart, a bet on the Indian founder. Not the idea alone, not the market size, not the pitch deck — the person behind it.

The investment philosophy is deceptively simple: find people who think clearly, operate honestly, and have the hunger to build something that outlasts the current funding cycle. Apply capital thoughtfully. Stay out of the way. It is a philosophy that sounds obvious until you look at how much of the venture industry does the opposite.

In practice, this means Nikhil spends a significant amount of time in conversations — with founders, economists, scientists, and the occasional chess grandmaster. The conversations are not networking. They are research. He is, at all times, trying to figure something out.

## HOW TO LIVE WELL NOT JUST ACCUMULATE WELL

Away from markets and microphones, Nikhil is a practitioner of mindfulness and a student of philosophy. He thinks seriously about how to live — not just how to build. These are not the hobbies of a man performing depth for a magazine profile. They are the preoccupations of someone who genuinely believes that the examined life is more interesting than the optimized one. He has spoken publicly about the diminishing returns of accumulation. About the point at which wealth stops solving problems and starts creating different, subtler ones. About the gap between financial intelligence and emotional intelligence, and the expense of confusing the two.





## THE LONG GAME

What emerges, across the companies and the conversations and the contradictions, is a portrait of a man who has taken the central lesson of chess — patience, positional thinking, comfort with ambiguity — and applied it to everything. He is playing a game that most people around him haven't realized is even being played.

He dropped out at sixteen because the system didn't interest him. He built a billion-dollar company without outside capital because the alternative didn't make sense to him. He asks uncomfortable questions on a public platform because pretending certainty bores him. Each of these choices, viewed individually, looks like stubbornness. Viewed together, they form a coherent philosophy.

Adapt or disappear — he titled his story that way for a reason. It isn't advice. It's a description of how he has always operated: not by predicting change, but by remaining the kind of person who can absorb it, use it, and keep moving. The market, in the end, doesn't care about your narrative. It cares whether you're still standing. Nikhil Kamath is still standing. He'd probably tell you he's not entirely sure why. And that, somehow, is the most honest answer of all.

## ABOUT NIKHIL KAMATH

Nikhil Kamath is the co-founder of Zerodha, India's largest retail brokerage by active clients, and True North, a venture and investment platform. Born in Bangalore in 1987, he dropped out at sixteen and began trading equities as a teenager. He hosts the podcast WTF is with Nikhil Kamath, one of India's most widely followed business and ideas shows. He has not, to date, raised outside funding for any business he has built.

THE KING WHO NEVER BRAKED

# FIRE MEETS FABRIC

Gautam Singhania inherited an empire of threads and turned it into a dynasty of fire, fashion, and fearless ambition. Under his stewardship, Raymond transformed from a textile house into a lifestyle conglomerate touching everything from luxury suiting to real estate. The man who once wore his grandfather's brand now tailors the aspirations of an entire subcontinent  one precisely cut suit at a time.

If resilience were a fabric, Gautam Singhania's story would be the finest wool ever spun.

His personal and professional journey has weathered public scrutiny, boardroom battles, and the relentless churn of a global market yet each episode has returned him sharper, bolder, and more focused on his singular vision: to make Raymond a brand the world whispers about with reverence. As Raymond continues its ambitious real estate and lifestyle expansion, industry watchers see in Singhania not a man managing a legacy — but an architect furiously building a new one. The legend, as it turns out, is still being written. And judging by the pace he keeps, it will be extraordinary.

Long before lifestyle brands discovered the language of performance, Gautam Singhania was living it. An avid racing driver and certified pilot, he has competed on tracks across the world — not as a hobby, but as an extension of his identity. The cockpit, he has said, teaches you what no boardroom ever can: that hesitation is the costliest luxury of all.

His passion for aviation and motorsport is not a billionaire's indulgence — it is the operating system behind one of India's most decisive corporate minds. Every acquisition, every pivot, every brand reinvention at Raymond bears the hallmark of a man trained to react in milliseconds and commit without apology.

## Born to Command

### "The Phoenix Businessman: Burning Bright After Every Storm"

There are chairmen, and then there are forces of nature. Gautam Singhania  CMD of Raymond Group  belongs unmistakably to the second category. Born into the storied Singhania legacy, he did not merely inherit the mantle; he ripped it apart, stitched it back finer, and wore it to every boardroom, racetrack, and runway he ever stepped onto.

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preparation, the ability to hold a wide-angle view while managing precise detail, and the composure to navigate uncertainty without losing sight of the destination.

It is, in many ways, a fair description of the role he has stepped into. The Adani Group operates across fourteen businesses in over fifty countries. Steering any part of that machine requires exactly the kind of mind that can zoom out far enough to see the whole, then zoom back in with surgical precision. Jeet appears to be developing that capability methodically, without fanfare.

## Beyond the Fabric: A Skyline of Ambition

**"In personal and business life, you always have ups and downs, but it's only the tough that survive."**

From the high-octane tracks of international racing to the meticulous boardrooms of a century-old empire, Gautam Hari Singhania embodies a rare fusion of adrenaline and precision. As the Chairman and Managing Director of the Raymond Group, Singhania hasn't just maintained a legacy; he has engineered a revolution, transforming a traditional textile house into a diversified global powerhouse. When Singhania took the reins in the early 90s, Raymond was a name synonymous with heritage. Today, under his "Raymond 2.0" vision, it is a name synonymous with innovation. By strategically demerging the group into three distinct pillars—Lifestyle, Real Estate, and Engineering—he has unlocked unprecedented value, proving that even a 100-year-old giant can move with the agility of a startup.

Under Singhania's leadership, Raymond became more than a fabric company; it evolved into a broader brand platform with apparel, lifestyle, and real estate interests.

The company's recent restructuring has further split the business into distinct listed entities, including Raymond Lifestyle and Raymond Realty, reinforcing the shift from a legacy conglomerate to a more specialized set of businesses

Raymond Realty, in particular, has become a notable growth story, with reported revenue of ₹2,313 crore in fiscal 2025 and year-on-year growth of 45%. That expansion reflects a larger pattern in Singhania's approach: using old assets in new ways and extracting fresh value from businesses that had long been part of the Raymond ecosystem

Part of Gautam Singhania's public appeal comes from the way he lives outside the boardroom. He has been closely associated with luxury cars, yachts, planes, and motorsport culture, including the Super Car Club of India. This gives him an image that is very different from the usual industrialist profile — more flamboyant, more visible, and far more lifestyle-driven.

Gautam Singhania remains a survivor of both market volatility and personal storms. By modernizing his portfolio and staying true to the core values of Trust, Quality, and Excellence, he has ensured that Raymond remains a national asset.

While many look westward, Singhania's focus remains sharply on the Indian consumer. He champions the narrative of domestic consumption, believing that the true strength of the Raymond brand lies in its deep emotional connection with the Indian middle class.

# THE DIRECTION IS CLEAR

There are chairmen, and then there are forces of nature. Gautam Singhania  of Raymond Group  belongs unmistakably to the second category. Born into the storied Singhania legacy, he did not merely inherit the mantle; he ripped it apart, stitched it back finer, and wore it to every boardroom, racetrack, and runway he ever stepped onto. Under his stewardship, Raymond transformed from a textile house into a lifestyle conglomerate touching everything from luxury suiting to real estate. The man who once wore his grandfather's brand now tailors the aspirations of an entire subcontinent  one precisely cut suit at a time. Long before lifestyle brands discovered the language of performance, Gautam Singhania was living it. An avid racing driver and certified pilot, he has competed on tracks across the world — not as a hobby, but as an extension of his identity. The cockpit, he has said, teaches you what no boardroom ever can: that hesitation is the costliest luxury of all.

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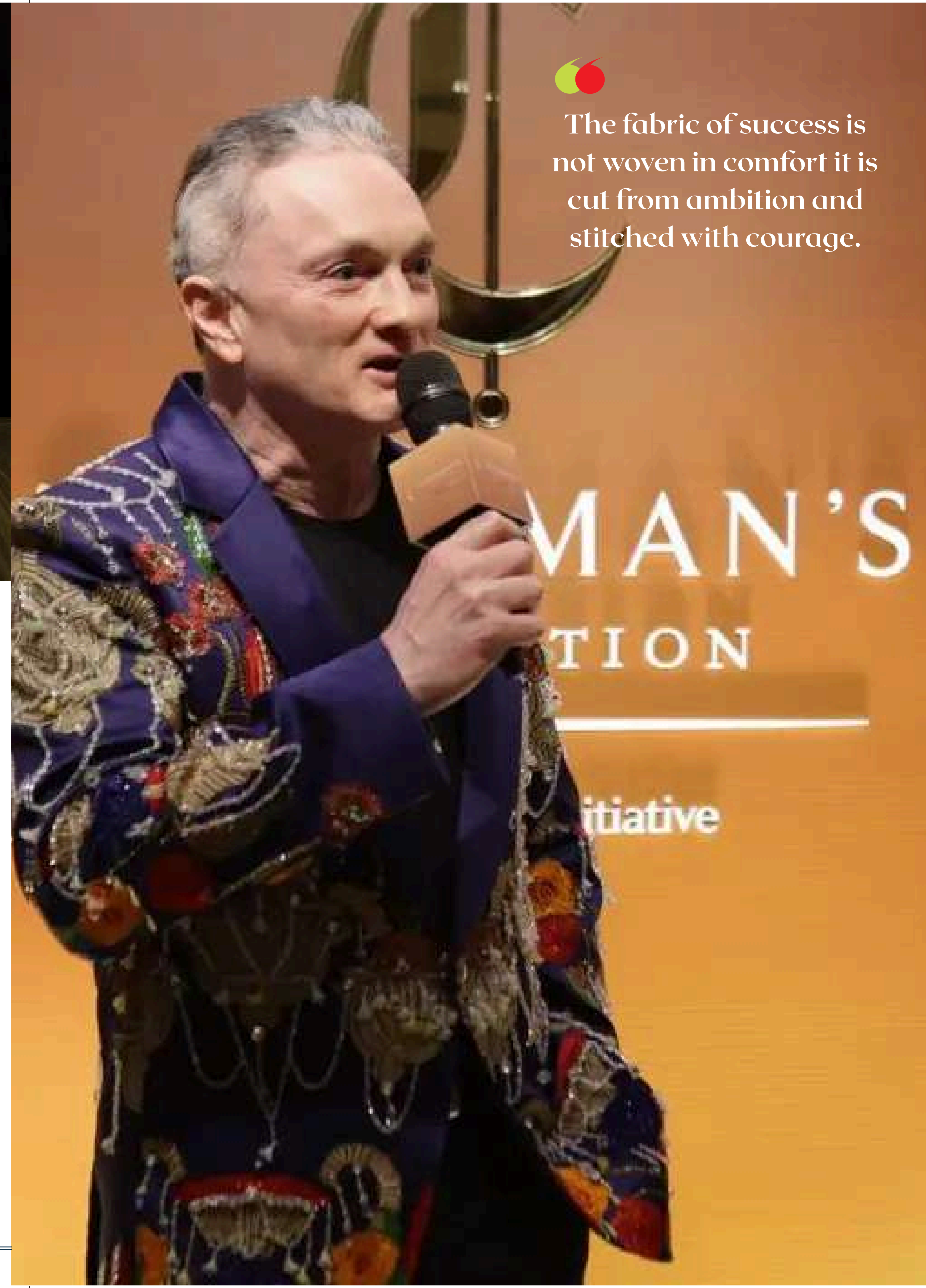


# PILLARS OF ADMINISTRATION

Over three decades of tireless public service, from district roads to the corridors of the Home Department.

## Steel in Service: How Manisha Patankar Mhaiskar Shaped Maharashtra's Governance

The IAS is an institution that demands versatility an officer may find herself managing disaster relief one year and negotiating land acquisition for a highway the next. She embraced every assignment with characteristic rigour. Over three decades, she served across a range of critical portfolios, steadily ascending through Maharashtra's administrative hierarchy. She served as Additional Chief Secretary and Chief Protocol Officer in the General Administration Department before being transferred and posted as Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department (PWD), holding additional charge of Chief Protocol Officer. Her tenure at the PWD one of Maharashtra's most operationally intensive departments, responsible for roads, bridges, and public buildings was particularly notable. Under her stewardship, the PWD was honoured by the Chief Minister for outstanding performance in the State Government's 150-day e-Governance reform programme.

The award, received by Patankar-Mhaiskar herself, was a recognition not just of her department's efficiency, but of her ability to embed modern governance practices into a traditionally brick-and-mortar domain.

The Home Department is arguably Maharashtra's most consequential portfolio overseeing law and order, police administration, prisons, disaster management, and internal security across a state of over 120 million people. Patankar-Mhaiskar brings more than three decades of administrative experience to a role that demands both operational mastery and political dexterity. Her appointment has been widely viewed as a recognition of her consistent track record in high-stakes roles. Industry observers and governance watchers alike note that her elevation to ACS (Home) may well be a precursor to even higher responsibility.

# *Rising Through the Ranks:* A Career Built on Infrastructure and Governance

In a world that often asks women to prove themselves twice over, She has spent thirty-three years simply doing the work with quiet confidence, institutional depth, and an abiding commitment to public service. As Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar steps into one of the most scrutinised offices in Maharashtra's bureaucracy. The challenges ahead are significant managing a complex law-and-order apparatus, modernising policing through technology, and ensuring that governance reaches the last mile. But if her record in the PWD, the General Administration Department, and across decades of field postings is any guide, she is more than equal to the task What distinguishes Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar from many of her peers is not just the breadth of her portfolio — it is her inner architecture. She subscribes to the philosophy of "living in the moment." For her, life is "now" — and that is the reason she is at peace with herself. A fierce believer in the Theory of Karma, she approaches each posting with immense satisfaction. In a service where officers often spend years lamenting transfers and strategising next moves, this is a genuinely rare disposition She approaches the role of a woman in public service not with grievance but with quiet insistence.

daughter rather than find her a match — is, she believes, not exceptional. It is what every family is capable of, if it chooses differently. To young women aspiring to join the civil services, her message is both grounding and galvanising: The opportunities are many. Women should exercise the freedom of choice. I look to each new day that brings new challenges. Do your best and thank the Almighty for a day well spent. Outside the Mantralaya corridors, Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar is a woman of rich personal passions. Reading and writing are two important passions — like the proverbial two sides of a coin. While she reads a lot, she writes extensively and believes in drafting her own work. Her professor once noted that she had the ability to write very well, with a poetic narration — a trait she has nurtured even today when time is in scarce supply. Travel, for her, is never tourism — it is immersion. Although she has travelled to the US and Europe, even a short trip to rural interiors or dense jungles is rejuvenating. Travel is an experience in itself — getting acquainted with different people, different cultures, and savouring different cuisines. Cuisines peculiar to the areas she has visited are tried and recreated at home. It is not merely about discovering new places but merging into the ambience and flow.



Legend

# PARTNERS IN SERVICE:

## MANISHA & MILIND MHAISKAR MAHARASHTRA'S MOST REMARKABLE IAS COUPLE



# The conscience of the corridors

The Indian Administrative Service is not known for love stories. It is known for transfers, postings, difficult districts, and thankless tasks. And yet, within the storied 1992 batch of the Maharashtra cadre, something quietly extraordinary began — a partnership between two young civil servants that would, over three decades, become one of the most admired in Maharashtra's bureaucratic history. Milind Mhaiskar is a 1991 batch IAS officer and an IIT Bombay alumnus. Manisha Patankar entered the IAS through the 1992 batch of the Maharashtra cadre. Their careers began almost in parallel, navigating the vast machinery of the Maharashtra government — field postings, district administration, state-level roles — each carving an independent identity while remaining each other's steadiest anchor. The bonding between Manisha and Milind is not only that of an ideal couple but also of being good compatriots — having started their careers almost in parallel, the friendship only strengthened over time.

# Scale Defines Real Estate. Precision Defines Leadership

Ayushi Ashar is reshaping India's real estate narrative by building systems that go beyond projects—towards a more integrated and intelligent urban future.
She has built her journey at the intersection of scale and precision, structuring growth with clarity and executing it with discipline. As Director at Ashar Group and Founder & CEO of Ashar Urban Futures Lab, she represents a new generation of real estate leadership, one that views development not as isolated projects, but as interconnected systems shaping how cities expand.
Her foundation was shaped in global financial ecosystems. A graduate of Emory University's Goizueta Business School, she began her career at JPMorgan Chase in New York, followed by private equity experience in Atlanta. These early roles instilled a deep understanding of capital allocation, operational discipline, and scalability- principles that would later define her approach to real estate in India.

In 2018, she returned to Mumbai and joined Ashar Group at a pivotal moment. The sector was evolving rapidly, with regulatory reforms, rising transparency, and increasing consolidation reshaping the competitive landscape. Her response was not incremental, it was structural. She focused on building an integrated development model where land acquisition, design, finance, and sales operate as a unified system rather than independent verticals.
Over the years that followed, this approach translated into both measurable scale and stronger execution. Ashar Group today reflects a legacy of over 25 years, with a diversified presence across residential, commercial, and redevelopment-led projects, 12.5 million square feet delivered and 17 million square feet under development. The business has expanded fourfold, delivering 11 mega launches across segments, with more than 6,000 units sold across six micro-markets.
Operationally, the shift has been defined by discipline and consistency- anchored by a strong RERA track record, an average project cycle of approximately 1,000 days, and a focus on quality-led execution. A key differentiator has been the group's emphasis on strategically located developments that ensure long-term value creation. Just as critical has been the work behind the scenes, building systems that prevent inefficiencies before they scale. From data-led decision-making frameworks to tighter stakeholder alignment, the focus has been on making execution predictable rather than reactive.



Beyond development, Ashar Group's footprint extends into a wider ecosystem—impacting 29,000+ residents, 200+ retail brands, 250+ corporate occupiers, and over 5,000 students. Together, these reflect not just scale, but a system-led approach to urban value creation.
This thinking is evident in flagship developments such as The Legend by Ashar and Navroze by Ashar, both located in Pali Hill, Bandra, Mumbai. Positioned in premium micro-markets, these projects combine design, context, and market insight. The Legend, developed on the site of late Dilip Kumar's bungalow, has become one of Mumbai's most recognised luxury addresses, while Navroze established strong benchmarks within its segment. Together, they reflect an understanding of evolving buyer expectations, where value is defined not just by space, but by identity and positioning.

## Growth is easy to achieve. Consistent, scalable growth requires systems.

As the organisation scaled, her focus evolved toward strengthening the quality of growth. This led to the articulation of her core philosophy: “scale with intent.” It reflects a disciplined approach to expansion where efficiency, consistency, and long-term value creation are prioritised alongside growth. Through initiatives such as Urban Maximalism, anchored in the Ashar Group design philosophy, she introduced a sharper focus on efficient layouts and experiential living. This philosophy emphasises efficient planning, contextual design, and a balance between aesthetics and functionality, while also integrating global best practices in construction and supply chain management. Sustainability, through green building certifications, became embedded within execution.

At the core of her leadership philosophy is a deeper responsibility- recognising that every development decision shapes decades of urban experience. In a country where a significant share of future urban infrastructure is yet to be built, real estate is no longer just about delivery timelines or sales velocity. It is about designing environments that remain functional, adaptable, and relevant over time.

In 2025, she extended this thinking beyond real estate operations with the launch of Ashar Urban Futures Lab. The idea emerged from a clear gap, while cities are expanding rapidly, the systems that support them remain under-innovated and fragmented.

# THE ONE THAT MATTERS

A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER STARTED SNEH ASHA FOUNDATION WITH ONE COMPUTER LAB IN A DHARAVI SCHOOL. THREE YEARS LATER, THEY RUN FIFTEEN LABS ACROSS 53 SCHOOLS – AND SUPPORT FIFTY SCHOLARS FROM MUMBAI'S MOST UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.

**15**
**Computer labs active**

**53**
**Schools in Mumbai & Thane**

**50+**
**Scholarship awardees**

**3**
**Years since founding**

Avighna is 13 years old and studies in Class 7 at Mumbai Public School CBSE, Bhavani Shankar Road, Dadar. Until two years ago, he had only limited access to a computer. Last month, he finished building an educational app called Elemento — letting users explore the periodic table — on TurboWarp, a high-performance extension of Scratch. He did not build it as a class project. He built it because he wanted to.

The computer lab where Avighna learned was set up by Sneh Asha Foundation, a Mumbai-based nonprofit now in its fourth year. Its founding premise was simple: you do not need to change the school to change the student. Give a child a computer, a curriculum, a dedicated teacher, and enough contact time. Everything else follows. Avighna's Elemento is the kind of thing that follows.

"Completing three years. Three hundred percent growth. And still, the only number I truly care about is one. The one child who had no path before this, and now does."

Siddhi Jaiswal, Founder & Managing Trustee, Sneh Asha Foundation

A Mother, a Daughter, and a Name

Sneh Asha Foundation was registered on March 27, 2023, under the Mumbai Public Trust Act. Its founder, Siddhi Jaiswal, spent years in finance and planning before deciding her second chapter would look different. She started the foundation with her daughter Sneha, then 25, an architect by training who handles media, technical work, and ground communication. Sneh means love; Asha means hope — and that is how the name came to be.

The two work as something between a leadership team and a creative partnership. Siddhi anchors vision, governance, and fundraising. Sneha moves faster in rooms full of students and has, in her mother's

> **Sneh Asha Foundation gave me a ladder to climb out of the circumstances that had always kept me grounded.**
>
> **- Sneha Chauhan,**
> Scholarship Awardee

words, a razor-sharp mind for the things Siddhi cannot see. Between them, they have scaled one lab into fifteen and built a scholarship program now in its third batch, with three concurrent cohorts supported at any given time.

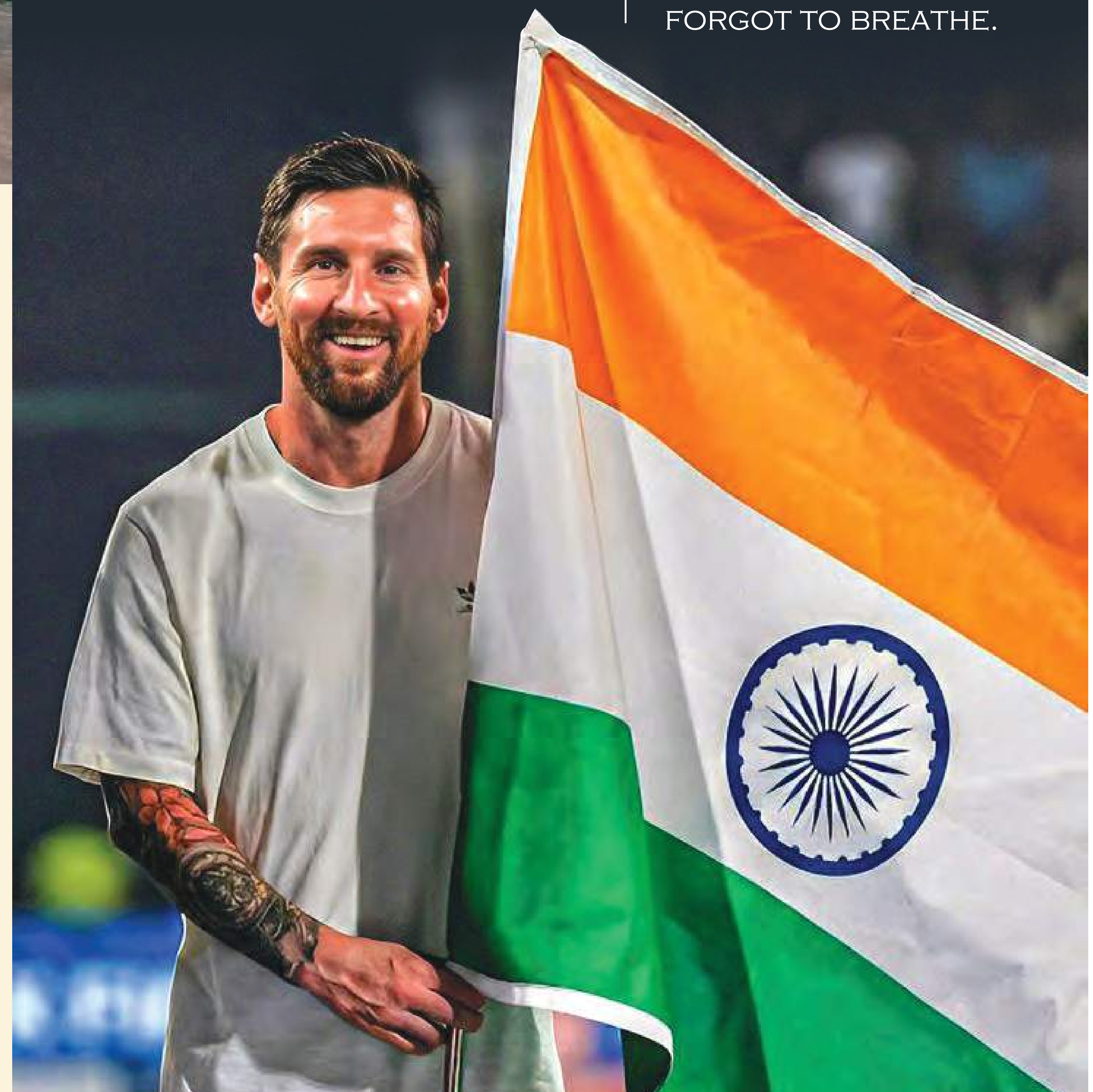
## The Scholarship — Who It Finds, and How

The scholarship program runs on three tracks: Saraswati supports SSC toppers through college. Shakti supports graduation-level students. Laxmi supports post-graduates. Selection for Saraswati begins with toppers' lists from municipal board results, followed by home visits, parent interviews, and multiple screening rounds.

The first cohort began in 2023 with 18 students. By the second year, 25 were supported. The third batch brings the total to over 50 scholars across all three tracks — drawn from Colaba, Worli, Dharavi, Kanjur Marg, Kurla, Turbhe, Poisar, and more. The breadth spans the whole city, not just the neighbourhoods that get the most attention.

# WHEN MUMBAI STOOD STILL

The day Lionel Messi arrived in India and a city that never sleeps forgot to breathe.




There are moments in a city's life that divide time into before and after. Mumbai has had a few the opening of the Sea Link, the night India won the 2011 World Cup at Wankhede, the first Shah Rukh Khan film that made the whole country cry. On a warm evening when a private jet touched down at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport carrying the greatest footballer to ever live, Mumbai quietly added another.

Lionel Messi had arrived. And the city — chaotic, indestructible, never-surprised Mumbai — genuinely did not know what to do with itself.

For two decades, Indian football fans had watched this man from the improbable distance of a 1:30 AM screen, La Liga and Ligue 1 kick-offs carved into sleep schedules like acts of devotion. Now he was here, in this city, breathing this air. Accompanied by his oldest allies — Luis Suárez, still carrying the mischief of a man who has won everything and enjoyed every moment of it, and Rodrigo De Paul, the engine room behind Argentina's 2022 miracle — Messi's India visit was three days that felt like a fever dream nobody wanted to wake up from.

## Two Number Tens and a Padel Court

The first collision of worlds happened at the Cricket Club of India, where sport's most sacred hierarchies briefly suspended themselves. The Padel GOAT Cup — a tournament that managed to be both genuinely competitive and gloriously absurd — brought Messi onto a padel court in the heart of Mumbai. That alone would have been enough. What made it historic was the man on the other side of the net: Sachin Tendulkar, wearing the same quiet smile he has always worn when he is doing something he loves. Two number tens. One who conquered the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, the other who lifted the 2011 Cricket World Cup at the very stadium a few kilometres away. The image of them on that court — laughing, competing, genuinely delighted by each other's presence — travelled around the world within hours. It needed no caption. Some moments explain themselves.



## The Lesson at Wankhede

If the padel court was spectacle, what happened at Wankhede Stadium the following morning was something quieter and more lasting. The hallowed turf where Tendulkar took his final bow, where India has broken hearts and mended them — was transformed for a coaching clinic unlike anything the old ground had seen. Sixty young Indian footballers, thirty boys and thirty girls, stood on that grass and received instruction from the best player in the history of the sport. Messi, famously reserved in public settings, was unrecognisable. He laughed through Rondo drills. He corrected technique with a patience that surprised everyone watching. He played. The children, for their part, were somewhere between terrified and transcendent — the expression of someone experiencing something they will describe to their grandchildren.

Behind the seamless organisation of the Wankhede event stood Pravin Pardeshi, whose administrative precision and quiet efficiency ensured that what could have been logistical chaos became one of the most smoothly executed sporting events the city has hosted — a reminder that the best management is the kind nobody notices.

## The Night Mumbai Dressed Up

As evening fell, the circus moved to the Jio World Convention Centre — and circus is the right word, deployed affectionately.

A star-studded charity fashion show brought together two industries that have long admired each other from a careful distance. Bollywood and football shared a ramp. Shah Rukh Khan, who has spent a career understanding exactly what mass adoration feels like, walked alongside a man who invented a new category of it. Ranveer Singh, constitutionally incapable of underplaying any moment, ensured nobody in the room was bored. The centrepiece of the evening was an auction — a match-worn Argentina jersey from the Qatar 2022 World Cup final. The shirt Messi wore the night he finally, definitively, irrevocably became the greatest of all time. It sold for several crores. Every rupee went to local children's healthcare initiatives, channelled through the Leo Messi Foundation's expanding India partnership.

For a man who has won every trophy the sport offers, the evening felt like a reminder of what he considers the longer game. Legacy, for Messi, has never been only about what happens on a pitch.

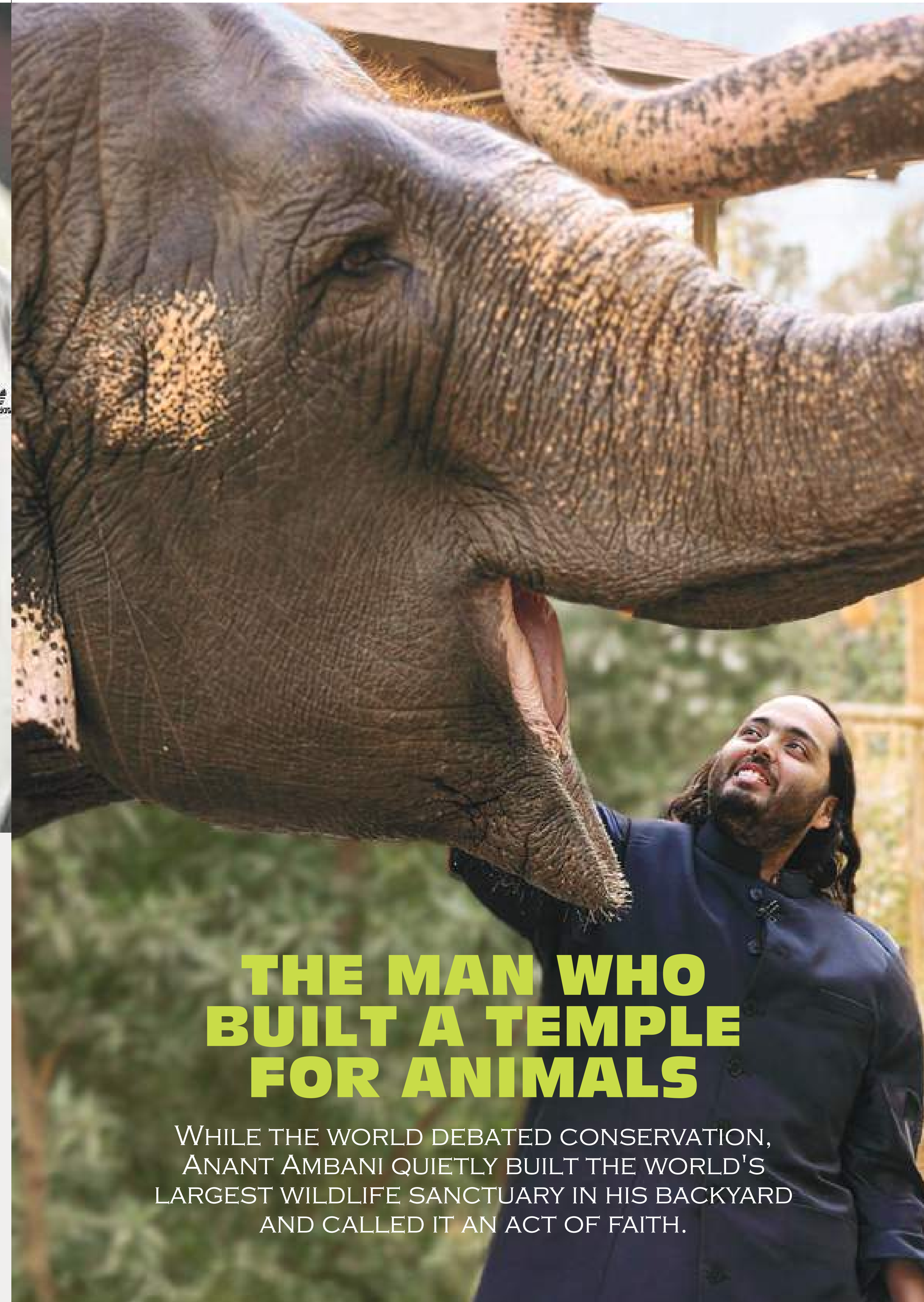

## Jamnagar Where the King Met the Jungle

The final chapter of the tour was its most unexpected — and its most quietly profound. No stadium. No red carpet. No crowd. Instead, the lush sanctuary of Vantara in Jamnagar, where Anant Ambani has built something rare in modern India — a genuine, functioning wildlife conservation centre that operates not as spectacle but as serious rehabilitation work. Messi arrived differently here. The global superstar receded. What remained was a curious, unhurried man with a tilak on his forehead, participating in an evening Aarti at the temple complex within the sanctuary, moving through a space that demanded presence rather than performance. Anant Ambani guided Messi personally through the Elephant Hospital — a facility that has treated and rehabilitated hundreds of animals. Radhika Ambani was beside them, and the warmth of the evening was a world away from the frenzy of Mumbai forty-eight hours earlier.

Then came the moment that stopped the internet. A rescued lion cub, small and impossibly dignified, was brought forward. Anant and Radhika announced its name: Lionel. A bridge, symbolic and sincere, between the king of the pitch and the king of the jungle. The footballer who grew up being called La Pulga — the Flea — now had a lion named after him in the forests of Gujarat. Messi, characteristically, said very little. He didn't need to.


## What It Meant

India has always loved Messi. But there is a difference between loving someone from a distance and having them stand in your city, on your soil, in your stadiums — teaching your children, walking your red carpets, feeding your elephants. What this visit gave India was not simply access to a celebrity. It was confirmation — felt rather than argued — that the country has arrived at a place where the world's greatest come not as a courtesy, but because India is worth coming to. For the sixty children at Wankhede who learned a Rondo drill from the best to ever do it, that distinction matters not at all. They were there. He was there. And for one extraordinary morning, the ground beneath their feet belonged equally to cricket and football, to legacy and possibility, to everything that has been and everything still to come. Mumbai has always been the city of dreams. For twenty-four hours, it was also the city of Messi. And somehow, impossibly, it felt like both were equally true.



# THE MAN WHO BUILT A TEMPLE FOR ANIMALS

While the world debated conservation, Anant Ambani quietly built the world's largest wildlife sanctuary in his backyard and called it an act of faith.

There is a particular kind of conviction that does not announce itself. It does not seek applause or validation. It simply builds quietly, methodically, at extraordinary scale — until one day the world looks up and realises something remarkable has been standing there all along.

That is Vantara. And that, in many ways, is Anant Ambani. In Jamnagar, Gujarat a city better known for the industrial might of Reliance's refinery complex than for ecological idealism something quietly extraordinary has taken root across 3,500 acres of green belt. Not a zoo. Not a resort. Not a corporate social responsibility exercise dressed in the language of conservation. Something far more serious, far more personal, and far more ambitious than any of those things.

Vantara Sanskrit for Star of the Forest is the world's largest rescue, rehabilitation, and conservation initiative. And it exists because one man, from childhood, has seen God in every animal he has ever encountered.

## A Faith That Built an Institution

To understand Vantara, you have to understand Anant Ambani not as the youngest son of Mukesh and Nita Ambani, but as a person shaped by a particular spiritual and ethical conviction that runs deeper than philanthropy.

## "I see God in every animal," he has said. "And Vantara is my temple."

It is a statement that could sound performative coming from someone else. From Anant, it reads as a literal description of how he moves through the world. From childhood, he approached animals with a reverence that went beyond affection. Where others saw creatures, he saw lives deserving of dignity lives that, in many cases, the human world had comprehensively failed.

Vantara is the institutional expression of that conviction. It is seva selfless service scaled to a level that has no precedent in private conservation anywhere on earth.



## What Rescue Actually Looks Like

Conservation, as a concept, is easy to endorse. The practice of it is considerably harder and considerably less comfortable than the word suggests.

Vantara operates one of India's most advanced wildlife ambulance fleets, deployed not just domestically but globally, extracting animals from illegal trafficking networks, abusive captivity conditions, and the aftermath of natural disasters. These are not photogenic rescues. They are slow, dangerous, logistically complex operations that require veterinary expertise, legal navigation across multiple jurisdictions, and the kind of institutional commitment that cannot be switched on and off based on media cycles.

Once an animal arrives at Vantara, the work has barely begun. Specialised zones — designed with scientific precision to mirror natural habitats for big cats, herbivores, primates, and dozens of other species become home. The Dhirubhai Ambani Wildlife Research Laboratory provides species-specific medical care, blending modern veterinary science with traditional Ayurvedic protocols. The ultimate goal, wherever possible, is rewilding working with government bodies to return rehabilitated animals safely to their natural ecosystems.

Four pillars. Rescue. Rehabilitation. Revival. Rewilding. Simple to state. Enormously difficult to execute. Vantara does it daily, across more than 200 species.

## The Elephant Hospital

If one place within Vantara captures the scale and sincerity of what Anant has built, it is the 600-acre Elephant Hospital and Habitat.

More than 200 elephants live here. Most arrived broken chained in temples or circuses for years or decades, their bodies carrying the physical record of prolonged captivity. Chronic joint damage. Foot rot from

concrete floors. Psychological trauma that veterinarians are only beginning to develop frameworks for understanding.

What they find at Vantara is something that has no equivalent anywhere in the world. Hyperbaric oxygen chambers deployed here for the first time in India treat chronic injuries that previously had no solution. Hydrotherapy pools and jacuzzis, engineered specifically for aging pachyderms, address arthritis and joint pain with a gentleness that feels almost surreal given the scale of the animals involved. Sand beds replace hard floors. An Enrichment Factory produces customised diets individual nutritional plans, favourite fruits, the specific khichdi that each resident has come to love.

These are not luxuries. They are the considered medical responses of an institution that takes animal welfare seriously as a science. Each protocol has been developed, tested, and refined. Many are now shared with sanctuaries and zoos globally Vantara's research quietly raising the standard of elephant care worldwide.

Anant personally knows many of these elephants by name. He visits regularly. The relationship between this man and these animals animals that arrived at Vantara with every reason to distrust human presence is one of the most quietly moving things the sanctuary represents.

## Science at the Scale of Compassion

Vantara challenges a persistent and damaging assumption — that animal welfare is a soft concern, subordinate to harder sciences and harder economics.

The Wildlife Multi-Speciality Hospital at Vantara rivals human medical centres in both equipment and expertise. MRI and CT scan machines calibrated for large animals. Robotic surgical units. A dedicated Genome Project building a genetic reservoir for endangered species whose populations have been reduced to the edge of viability.

More than 3,000 professionals work across the facility — Indian veterinarians, expatriate specialists, researchers, and conservation scientists — all contributing to treatment protocols and vaccine development that are shared openly with institutions around the world. The philosophy is what Vantara calls One Health: the recognition that the wellbeing of animals and the health of shared ecosystems are not separate concerns. They are the same concern, viewed from different angles.

The results of this approach speak in ways that statistics rarely manage to. The Spix's Macaw — a brilliantly blue parrot once declared extinct in the wild — was carefully bred at Vantara, certified disease-free through rigorous protocols, and successfully reintroduced to its native forests in Brazil. A species that had disappeared from the earth is flying again, in part because of what was built in Jamnagar.

CITES, the international body governing wildlife trade and conservation, now recognises Vantara as a global hub of conservation excellence. Governments in Mexico, Venezuela, and across Southeast Asia have partnered with the facility for wildlife relocation and protection programmes. Private Indian enterprise, through the vision of one young man, is leading the world in ecological restoration.

## The Inheritance Anant Chose

The Ambani name carries the weight of an industrial legacy that transformed modern India. Dhirubhai Ambani built an empire from almost nothing. Mukesh Ambani expanded it into a conglomerate that touches nearly every aspect of Indian life. Each generation has added something scale, diversification, ambition expressed in steel and fibre optic cable and retail square footage. Anant's contribution is different in kind. Not less ambitious — arguably more so, given that conservation operates on timelines that dwarf any business cycle. But different in texture. Where the Ambani legacy has largely been written in infrastructure, Anant is writing his in ecosystems. In species pulled back from extinction. In elephants that arrived broken and leave, years later, capable of something resembling dignity. As Reliance marks twenty-five years of its Jamnagar refinery — the industrial foundation upon whose green belt Vantara quietly flourishes — there is something profound in the coexistence. The refinery and the sanctuary. Industry and ecology. Progress and preservation. Anant has made the case, through Vantara's very existence, that these things are not opposites. That a country serious about its future must hold both simultaneously. "Conservation is not for tomorrow," he has said. "It is a shared dharma we must uphold today."

# THE ETERNAL BUILDER

Sabeer Bhatia gave the world free email at 29. He's still not done.

In 1996, a twenty-nine-year-old Indian engineer in Silicon Valley proposed something radical that communication should be free, borderless, and available to anyone with a browser. Eighteen months later, Hotmail had twelve million users. Microsoft wrote a cheque for USD 400 million.

Most people would have stopped there.

Sabeer Bhatia is not most people.

Hotmail was never just a product. It was a philosophy — that access to communication was a fundamental human right, not a privilege rationed by geography or income. That a student in Chennai and a banker in Chicago deserved the same digital voice.

The world agreed. And in agreeing, it handed a young Indian founder from IIT Delhi something more valuable than the acquisition price — proof that the game was open. That signal travelled back to India and lodged itself in the imagination of an entire generation of engineers who suddenly understood that Silicon Valley was not a closed room. Bhatia did not just build Hotmail. He demonstrated that it was possible. In innovation, possibility is often the most valuable currency of all.

## The Problem He's Solving Now

Three decades on, the digital divide his generation tackled has been replaced by something subtler and more stubborn — an opportunity divide. The gap between people with genuine merit and people with access to the systems that reward it.

His answer is ShowReel — a video-first professional networking platform built on a single conviction: the resume is a relic.

A static piece of paper cannot capture how someone thinks, communicates, or brings energy to a problem. It captures credentials. It does not capture people. ShowReel strips away the gatekeepers — the school brand, the city, the network — and lets merit speak directly. In his words, he is attempting to do for employment what Hotmail did for communication.

The timing is deliberate. As artificial intelligence reshapes the job market at a pace institutions cannot match, the old hiring infrastructure is not just inefficient — it is actively excluding the people who most need access to opportunity. Bhatia's argument is clear: AI should not replace the worker. It should amplify the human.

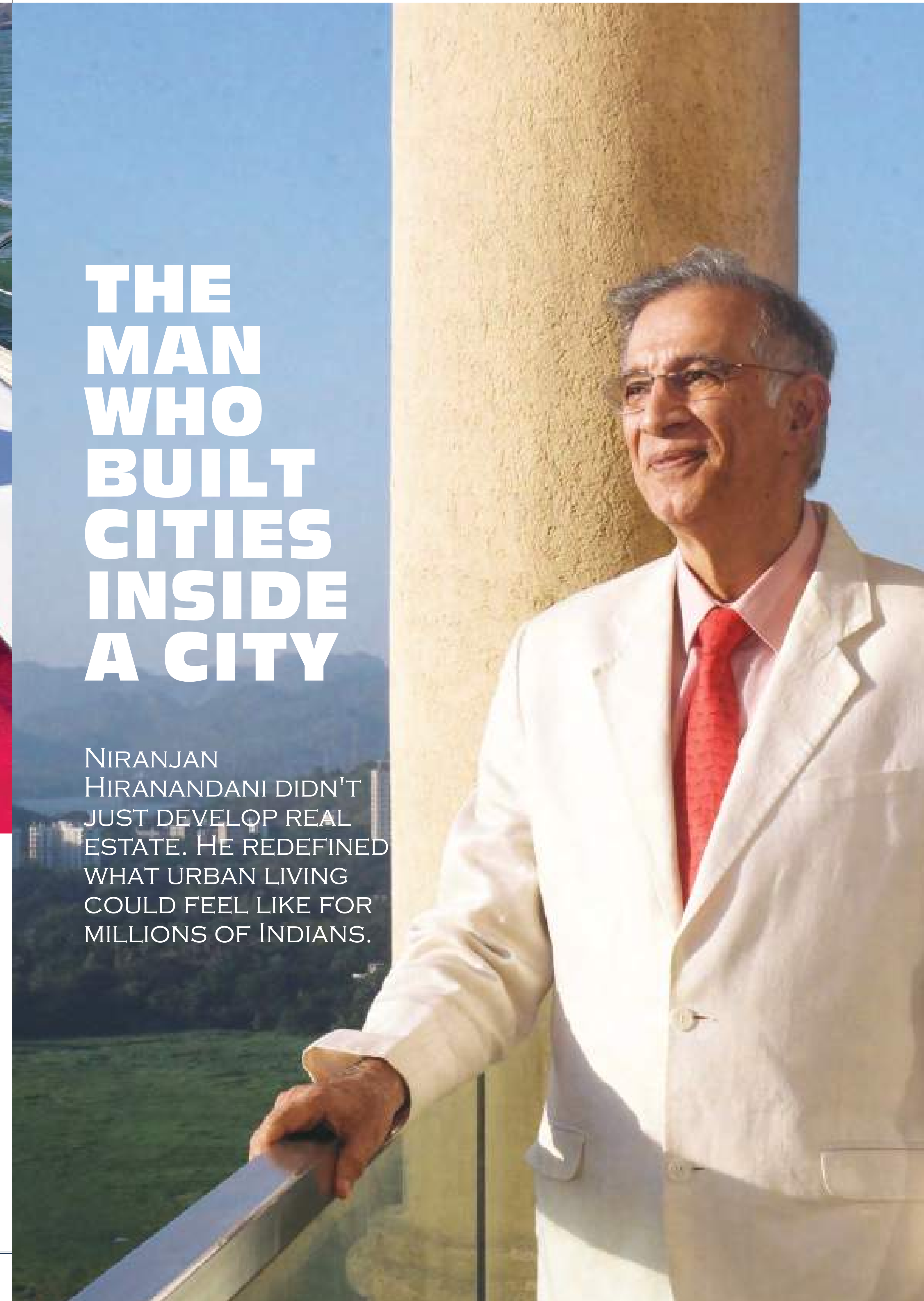
What marks Bhatia's evolution is a shift from bits to atoms — from purely digital problems to deeply physical ones. Sustainable infrastructure. Green technology. The energy systems that will determine whether the next billion people coming online inherit a liveable planet.

He treats sustainability not as a responsibility but as an engineering challenge — one demanding the same qualities that built the internet. Scalability through simplicity. Solutions designed for the person who needs them most, not the person who can afford the premium version.

Most founders who exit at twenty-nine spend their fifties as comfortable observers. Bhatia remains, stubbornly, in the work — still identifying problems, still building solutions, still operating with the urgency of someone who believes the next thing matters as much as the last. The man who gave the world its first free email is now building what he hopes will be its first truly meritocratic platform. The canvas has changed. The conviction hasn't.

He isn't predicting the future. He is, once again, coding it into existence.





# THE MAN WHO BUILT CITIES INSIDE A CITY

NIRANJAN HIRANANDANI DIDN'T JUST DEVELOP REAL ESTATE. HE REDEFINED WHAT URBAN LIVING COULD FEEL LIKE FOR MILLIONS OF INDIANS.

In the early 1980s, Powai was nobody's idea of a destination. A barren, rocky quarry on the outskirts of Mumbai — the kind of land that serious developers drove past on their way to somewhere more promising. Niranjan Hiranandani bought it, stood in the middle of it, and saw something nobody else could.

What stands there today — Hiranandani Gardens, with its distinctive neoclassical architecture, tree-lined boulevards, schools, hospitals, retail, and thousands of homes — is not just a real estate project. It is proof of a thesis. That Indians deserved better than the transactional, infrastructure-free housing that the market had decided was good enough. That a developer could build not just apartments but entire ecosystems of living — and that people would come.

Long before "integrated township" entered the vocabulary of Indian real estate, Hiranandani was building one. His philosophy was disarmingly simple: give the customer what they need before they know they need it.

In practice this meant schools within walking distance. Hospitals inside the township perimeter. Green spaces that weren't afterthoughts but load-bearing parts of the design. Sewage treatment plants built into the infrastructure from day one. Forestation programmes that turned a quarry into one of Mumbai's greener addresses.

He was among the first developers in India to adopt precast construction technology — bringing speed, precision, and consistency to a sector famous for none of those things. The architectural signature he chose — neoclassical design, Romanesque arches, facades that aged with dignity — was deliberate. Buildings, he believed, should look like they were built to last. Because they were. Powai became the blueprint. Thane followed. Both are now benchmarks — not just in India but in conversations about urban development globally.

His relationship with government has always been that of a constructive critic — willing to challenge, unwilling to obstruct, consistently focused on outcomes rather than positions. In a sector that spent much of the twentieth century operating in opacity, that advocacy helped move the needle toward accountability. Those who know him describe a man whose personal discipline mirrors his professional one. A committed marathon runner well into his seventies, Hiranandani approaches fitness the way he approaches construction — methodically, consistently, without shortcuts.

He engages regularly with young entrepreneurs and startups, less as a mentor dispensing wisdom and more as a genuine student of what the next India wants. That curiosity — the refusal to assume that what worked before will work again — is perhaps his most underrated quality. As the Mumbai Metropolitan Region enters its most ambitious phase of transformation — the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, the Navi Mumbai Airport, the metro network expanding in every direction — the townships he built decades ago are emerging as the foundations that the new city is growing around. He did not just predict Mumbai's future. He quietly built the infrastructure for it.

# BORN FREE

**EVERY GENERATION OF THE BIRLA FAMILY BUILT SOMETHING THAT DEFINED ITS ERA. ANANYA'S BUILDING THREE SIMULTANEOUSLY.**


There is a particular kind of pressure that comes with a legendary surname. The Birla name does not whisper — it announces. Six generations of industrial empire-building, woven so deeply into the fabric of modern India that separating the family's legacy from the country's economic history is almost impossible.

Ananya Birla could have worn that name comfortably. She chose instead to do something far more interesting with it.

## The Microfinance Pioneer At Seventeen

Before the music contracts, before the platinum records, before the global stages — there was a seventeen-year-old who looked at rural India and saw a problem she wanted to solve.

Svatantra Microfin began as exactly that — a teenager's conviction that women entrepreneurs in India's villages deserved access to credit, dignity, and a genuine chance. What that conviction has become is extraordinary. By 2026, Svatantra has grown into India's second-largest microfinance institution, touching over 50 million lives across the country.

Not bad for a passion project. Not bad for any project.

The recognition followed — Fortune's 40 Under 40, the Gold Award for Best Start-Up — but the numbers tell the real story. Fifty million lives is not a statistic. It is the actual point.

## The Voice That Crossed Borders

While building a financial institution, Ananya was also doing something that raised eyebrows in both worlds she inhabited — making music. Seriously. Persistently. On her own terms.

Studying at Oxford, she performed in small London pubs before anyone was paying attention. Then came Meant to Be — the first English single by an Indian artist to go Platinum in India. Then came collaborations with Sean Kingston and Afrojack. Then came 500 million streams and a place in a conversation that Indian independent artists had never previously entered. She did not ask either world — business or music — for permission. She simply kept going until both took notice.

### The Legacy She's Choosing

Ananya Birla is proof that the most interesting thing a person with every advantage can do is refuse to coast on them. She has taken privilege and turned it into platform — for rural women, for independent music, for mental health conversations, for Indian luxury on a global stage. The greatest legacy, she has said, is not the one you inherit. It is the one you have the courage to create. She is creating several, all at once, and showing no signs of stopping.

# SAREE, BOOTS AND A POINT TO PROVE

KANGANA RANAUT WALKED INTO PARLIAMENT THE WAY SHE HAS ALWAYS WALKED INTO EVERY ROOM ON HER OWN TERMS, IN HER OWN CLOTHES, READY TO MAKE NOISE.

Nobody expected Kangana Ranaut to be a quiet parliamentarian. She has never been quiet about anything. What surprised people — including, by her own admission, herself — was how seriously she took the job.

Since her historic win from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh, the actress-turned-legislator has navigated one of the steepest learning curves in public life — from film sets and press conferences to constituency grievances, policy debates, and the particular unglamour of broken drains and rural road connectivity. She made that transition without apology and without pretence.

"I was told it required sixty to seventy days a year," she said candidly in early 2026. "It is a full-time commitment."

Coming from a film industry where image management is a professional discipline, that kind of honesty is its own statement.

## The Wardrobe as Manifesto

If Kangana's words have always been deliberate, her clothes in Parliament have been equally so — and considerably more strategic than they first appear.

Her signature look — a structured Kullu heritage coat layered over a crisp saree, finished with pointed leather boots and an Hermès satchel — reads at first glance as a collision of worlds. Traditional and luxury. Local and global. Pahadi wool and Parisian leather.

That collision is entirely intentional.

The Kullu coats she wears are woven by women-led artisan associations from her home state — indigenous wool, Pahadi craftsmanship, centuries of textile tradition carried into the halls of Parliament on the back of a sitting MP. Every time she walks through those corridors, she is carrying her constituency with her — literally.

Her saree-sweater pivot — replacing traditional blouses with fine-knit turtlenecks and pastels — is practical as much as aesthetic. Long parliamentary sessions demand functionality. She found a way to be functional without abandoning elegance, and in doing so created a Parliament style that the fashion industry has watched closely and the handloom sector has quietly celebrated.

Vocal for local, in Kangana's case, is not a slogan. It is a wardrobe.

## Inside the Chamber

The celebrity MP stereotype — high attendance at launches, low attendance in Parliament — does not apply here.

Kangana has maintained attendance figures that put many career politicians to shame, peaking at 100 percent in certain sessions. She sits in the front rows. She participates. Her maiden speech focused on the preservation of tribal heritage in Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti — not the obvious headline-grabbing topic, but the one that mattered most to the people who sent her there.

She has raised questions on rural electrification, DISCOM financial stress, disaster relief for Himachal flood victims, and India's Critical Mineral Mission. These are not glamorous issues. They are the issues that determine whether the lives of ordinary Himachalis improve or stagnate. She shows up for them.

# THE POWER BEHIND THE PITCH

Indian cricket doesn't run on talent alone. It runs on the people in the rooms where the decisions are made.

India does not simply play cricket. It owns it.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India is the most powerful sporting body in the world — not by accident, not by default, but by deliberate, decades-long institutional building that has turned a colonial pastime into a USD 10 billion empire. The IPL is the third most valuable sporting league on the planet. The ICC runs largely on BCCI's financial weight. When India speaks in cricket, the world listens.

But power of this scale does not sustain itself. Behind every boundary hit and broadcast deal, every bilateral series and grassroots academy, there are people — experienced, strategic, and deeply invested in the game's future — who keep the machinery running. These are some of them.

## Jay Shah : The Architect of Modern Cricket

No name in contemporary cricket administration carries more weight than Jay Shah. As the former BCCI Secretary who rose to become ICC Chairman — a position that places him at the helm of global cricket governance — Jay Shah represents the new face of Indian cricket's international ambition. His tenure at the BCCI was defined by an aggressive expansion of India's cricketing calendar, the professionalisation of domestic cricket infrastructure, and the negotiation of broadcast deals that reshaped the financial

landscape of the sport.

At the ICC, his mandate is broader and more complex — balancing the interests of cricket's established powers with the development of the game in emerging markets. His approach is characteristically methodical. He does not make noise about what he intends to do. He does it, and the results speak.

Under his watch, cricket's global footprint has expanded — more associate nations competitive, more bilateral series commercially viable, more broadcast revenue flowing to boards that previously operated on margins too thin to develop the game properly. The vision is a genuinely global cricket — not one dominated by three or four nations, but one where the sport's base is wide enough to sustain its future.

## Rajiv Shukla : The Diplomat of the Dressing Room

If Jay Shah is the architect, Rajiv Shukla is the diplomat — the man who has spent decades navigating the complex intersection of cricket, politics, and commerce with a fluency that few can match.

As BCCI Vice President and one of Indian cricket's most experienced administrators, Shukla brings a quality that is rarer in institutional life than it should be — the ability to build consensus across competing interests without losing sight of the game itself. His relationships span every level of Indian cricket's ecosystem, from state associations to central government, from franchise owners to players.

His understanding of cricket's political architecture — the alliances, the histories, the sensitivities — has made him an indispensable presence in BCCI's leadership through multiple eras of transformation. When negotiations become difficult and positions harden, Shukla is frequently the person in the room who finds the path through.

He has also been a consistent voice for cricket's expansion beyond its traditional strongholds — advocating for investment in states and regions where the game has talent but lacks the infrastructure to develop it. That advocacy reflects a genuine belief that Indian cricket's next chapter will be written not just in Mumbai and Delhi but in the tier-two cities and rural districts where the next generation of players is growing up.

## Arun Singh Dhumal : The Man Who Built the IPL Machine

If Jay Shah is the architect of Indian cricket's global ambition, Arun Singh Dhumal is the engine room of its most valuable commercial property.

As IPL Chairman and one of BCCI's most influential figures, Dhumal has been central to transforming the Indian Premier League from a successful domestic tournament into the third most valuable sporting league on the planet. Under his stewardship, the IPL has grown not just in commercial scale but in structural sophistication — tighter governance, stronger franchise relationships, and a media rights ecosystem that commands attention from the world's largest broadcasters.

His understanding of cricket's commercial architecture is matched by a deep operational knowledge of what makes a league function at this level — the logistics, the stakeholder management, the fine balance between franchise interests and the board's broader mandate. The IPL does not run itself. It runs because the right people are

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making the right decisions, consistently, away from the cameras.

Dhumal's contribution to that consistency is significant. He operates with the quiet authority of someone who knows exactly what the product is worth — and exactly what it takes to protect and grow that value season after season. In the rooms where IPL decisions are made, his presence is not ceremonial. It is load-bearing.

Beyond the commercial, he has been a thoughtful voice on cricket's structural questions — how the IPL and international cricket coexist, how franchise cricket develops rather than depletes the national talent pipeline, and how the board's responsibilities to the game's grassroots remain intact even as its commercial horizons expand.

## Ajinkya Naik : The Ground-Level Guardian

Every institution needs people who understand its foundations — the grassroots, the domestic structure, the pipelines through which future talent travels before it ever reaches a national stadium.

Ajinkya Naik represents that function within Indian cricket's administrative ecosystem. Working within the structures that govern domestic cricket development, Naik's focus has consistently been on the infrastructure that produces players rather than the spotlight that celebrates them.

In an era when Indian cricket's elite layer — the IPL, the national team, the broadcast rights — commands most of the attention and resources, the work of ensuring that domestic cricket remains robust, competitive, and genuinely developmental is both less glamorous and more important than it appears. The players who will represent India in 2030 are playing Ranji Trophy cricket today. The administrators who ensure that system functions properly are doing some of the most consequential work in Indian sport.

Naik's contribution to that layer of cricket — patient, structural, oriented toward outcomes that will only be visible years from now — reflects an understanding of the game that goes beyond the immediate and the visible.


Legend

# THE STATESMAN ON THE STREET

MOHIT KAMBOJ BHARATIYA DOESN'T GOVERN FROM A DISTANCE. HE BUILDS FROM THE GROUND UP IN BOARDROOMS, IN CONSTITUENCIES, AND ACROSS MUMBAI'S MOST BELOVED DINING TABLES.

formalisation, that shift required both diplomatic skill and genuine conviction. He brought both.

The credibility he built there — as someone who could modernise a traditional institution without alienating the people inside it — became the foundation of everything that followed.

His move into political life was not the reinvention it might appear from the outside. It was, in many ways, the same work applied to a larger canvas.

His restaurant ventures, spread across the city, are not a side project or a vanity investment. They are an extension of a philosophy. Each establishment — rooted in quality, accessibility, and a genuine understanding of what Mumbai's diverse population wants from a dining experience — reflects the same instinct that drives his public work. Meet people where they are. Deliver something real. Don't overcomplicate what works.

From South Mumbai to the suburbs, his restaurants have quietly become part of the city's fabric  places where a business lunch and a family dinner coexist comfortably, where the food speaks for itself without the theatre that so often substitutes for substance in Mumbai's competitive hospitality market. In building them, he has created employment, supported local suppliers, and demonstrated that commercial success and community value are not mutually exclusive goals.

It is, in miniature, the same argument he makes in politics.

## Philanthropy With Purpose

Through the Mohit Bharatiya Foundation, his commitment to the city takes its most direct form.

Youth education, community healthcare, social justice initiatives — the Foundation operates across each of these areas with a consistency that distinguishes it from the performative philanthropy that frequently accompanies public life. The work is

proactive rather than reactive. It does not wait for crises to respond to. It attempts, systematically, to address the conditions that produce them.

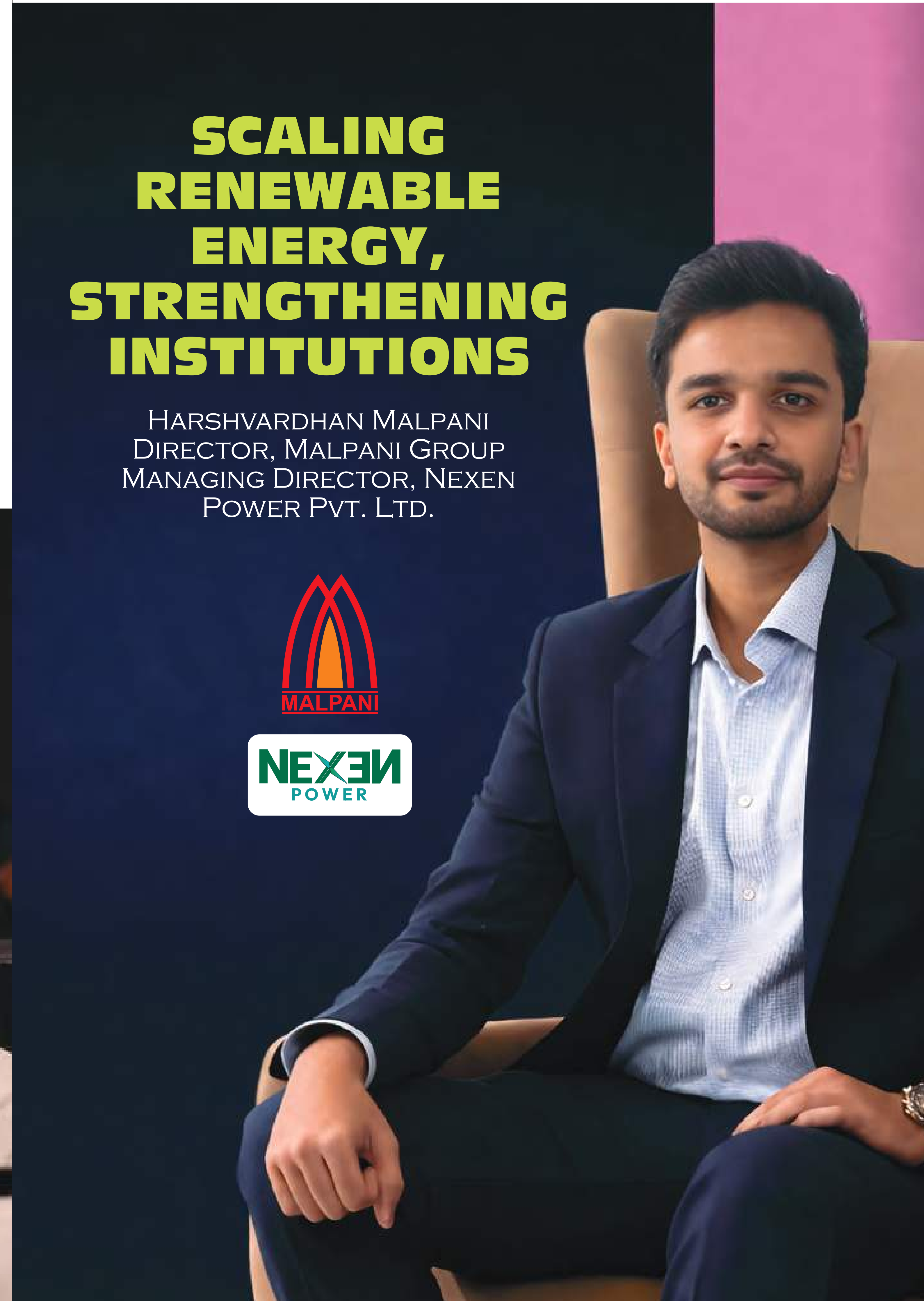
His guiding conviction is simple and unambiguous: power is only as good as the lives it improves. It is a standard he applies to himself as readily as to others — and one that, in a political culture often more comfortable with aspiration than accountability, carries genuine weight.

There are politicians who discover the people during election season. And then there are leaders who never lost them to begin with.

Mohit Kamboj Bharatiya belongs firmly in the second category. In a city as layered and demanding as Mumbai — where every constituency contains multitudes, where the distance between a high-rise boardroom and a chawl can be measured in metres but feels like continents — he has built a career on refusing to choose between the two worlds. He inhabits both, simultaneously, without apology.

Before the politics, there was the bullion. As National President of the Indian Bullion and Jewellers Association — one of India's most consequential trade bodies, representing a sector that moves billions of rupees daily — Mohit Kamboj Bharatiya did something that institutional leaders rarely manage. He did not simply occupy the position. He reformed it.

Under his leadership, IBJA underwent a fundamental shift in how it operated — toward greater transparency, stronger governance, and a more structured relationship between the bullion trade and the national regulatory framework. In an industry historically resistant to



For Harshvardhan Malpani, business growth has never been just about expansion. It has always been about building organisations strong enough to sustain that growth.

After completing his Industrial Engineering degree from the University of Illinois and his MBA from the Indian School of Business, he joined the Malpani Group with a clear intention — not to immediately change the organisation, but to first understand it.

As a fifth-generation Director of a century-old diversified conglomerate, he spent his early years learning from teams, understanding operations, and observing how multi-sector businesses build resilience over decades.

That experience shaped a leadership belief he continues to follow:

"Lasting transformation comes from strengthening foundations, not just expanding frontiers."

Today, his work reflects that thinking as he focuses on renewable energy, FMCG, and strategic investments - sectors where he believes long-term value creation is closely tied to disciplined execution.

## A Legacy Enterprise Preparing for the Future

The Malpani Group today operates across renewable energy, FMCG, entertainment, real estate, education, and investments. Built over generations, the Group represents a combination of entrepreneurial legacy and evolving professional management practices.

Harshvardhan often describes the organisation not just in terms of its businesses but through its people, referring to it as a 10,000+ strong extended Malpani family - a reflection of his belief that sustainable enterprises are built through trust and continuity of relationships.

While respecting the Group's legacy, his role today focuses on identifying sectors where the organisation can build meaningful scale while ensuring that institutional capabilities evolve alongside growth.

## Strengthening the Organisation Before Accelerating Growth

Before pursuing aggressive expansion, Harshvardhan placed strong emphasis on strengthening the Group's internal capabilities. His work has focused on improving governance practices, encouraging technology adoption, and bringing greater structure to support functions such as HR, finance, and organisational processes.

His leadership philosophy reflects a clear institutional mindset:

"The strength of any growing business is determined by the strength of the organisation behind it."

This focus on organisational depth reflects his belief that the most successful companies are those built to endure beyond individual leadership cycles.



## Renewable Energy: Building Nexen Power's Growth Platform

Renewable energy represents Harshvardhan's most active strategic focus today through Nexen Power, where he serves as Managing Director and is leading the Group's clean energy expansion journey.

Currently overseeing more than 584 MW of wind and solar assets across eight Indian states, he is working toward building Nexen into a 3 GW renewable energy platform through disciplined capacity addition, strategic partnerships, and next-generation energy solutions.

Under his leadership, Nexen is evolving beyond a traditional asset owner into a growth-focused renewable platform exploring hybrid energy solutions, Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), and industrial energy partnerships.

His view of India's renewable opportunity reflects both scale and responsibility:

"India's renewable transition is not just an environmental shift - it is one of the largest infrastructure opportunities of our generation."

Rather than focusing purely on rapid expansion, his approach remains grounded in execution capability and long-term viability.

"Capacity addition is easy. Building reliable energy platforms is what creates lasting value," he says.

## Growth Driven by Partnerships

A defining feature of Harshvardhan's approach has been his emphasis on partnerships as growth enablers. He believes the renewable energy sector will increasingly be shaped by organisations that can combine capital, execution capability, and trusted collaborations. His leadership style reflects a balance between decisiveness and long-term alignment. "The strongest growth platforms are built where long-term thinking meets execution speed," he believes. This philosophy continues to guide Nexen Power's expansion approach as it positions itself within India's rapidly evolving clean energy ecosystem.

## FMCG: Strengthening Market Fundamentals

Alongside renewable energy, Harshvardhan remains involved in strengthening the Group's FMCG business, focusing on improving market execution, expanding distribution strength, and driving operational discipline. His approach emphasizes consistency and resilience rather than short-term growth spikes. "In consumer businesses, market trust is built through consistency, not speed," he notes.

Webiste Link :
Nexen Power Pvt. Ltd

Linkedin link



## Investments: Building for Structural Growth

Harshvardhan also contributes to shaping the Group's investment direction, with a focus on sectors aligned with India's long-term development story, particularly infrastructure and energy transition opportunities.

His investment philosophy reflects long-term thinking:

"The most meaningful investments are those that align with where the country is structurally headed."

Growth That Includes Community

Despite expanding across sectors, Harshvardhan remains guided by the belief that business success must translate into wider regional development. Inspired by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's PURA philosophy, he believes enterprises must play a role in strengthening the economic ecosystems around them.

For him, growth must remain inclusive:

"Business success becomes meaningful when it creates opportunity beyond the organisation itself."

## Looking Ahead

As he continues to shape the Group's future direction, Harshvardhan remains focused on expanding Nexen Power's renewable platform, strengthening the FMCG business, and pursuing disciplined investment opportunities aligned with India's long-term growth story.

Across his work, one theme remains consistent - building organisations that are prepared not just for growth, but for longevity.

His leadership approach can perhaps be best summarized in a single belief:

"Great businesses are not remembered for how fast they grew, but for how strongly they were built."

As the Malpani Group enters its next phase of growth, Harshvardhan Malpani represents a generation of leaders focused on balancing legacy with ambition - building institutions designed not just for the present, but for the decades ahead.

## Nagpur startup CampusSwap crosses 1,000 student users in 73 days — heads to 10 more campuses

DPIIT-registered, all-female-founded peer-to-peer student marketplace built without a single rupee in advertising. Second Place winner at Symbiosis SIT Tank 2.0, Nagpur. Presented at Startup Mahakumbh, Delhi. Now targeting every college city in India.

Nagpur: When Avika Khemuka finished a semester, she had to leave behind nearly Rs 15,000 worth of goods — furniture, equipment and appliances — because there was no trusted, easy way to sell them quickly to fellow students. That frustration became CampusSwap.
Nagpur: When Avika Khemuka finished a semester, she had to leave behind nearly Rs 15,000 worth of goods — furniture, equipment and appliances — because there was no trusted, easy way to sell them quickly to fellow students. That frustration became CampusSwap.
The platform allows students to buy and sell used engineering instruments, medical equipment, electronics, hostel furniture, appliances, cycles, and sports gear — all within a closed, verified community. Every user must upload their college ID, which is authenticated through an OCR-powered system built on Google Cloud Vision API.

"Every one of those 1,000 users came through messages in college WhatsApp groups and QR code drives on campuses. No ads, no algorithms — just direct student outreach," said Avika Khemuka, Founder and Director of CampusSwap.

Khemuka, a final-year B.Tech student in Computer Science (Data Science and AI) at SRM University Haryana, founded CampusSwap to solve a problem every Indian college student knows firsthand — there is no trusted, student-only platform to buy and sell the goods that circulate between batches every year.
WON IN NAGPUR, PRESENTED IN DELHI
CampusSwap recently won Second Place at Symbiosis SIT Tank 2.0, held in Nagpur — one of Maharashtra's most competitive student startup competitions. The team also represented the platform at Startup Mahakumbh in Delhi, connecting with investors and mentors at the national level. The startup is DPIIT-registered under the Government of India's Startup India initiative and is led entirely by an all-female founding team — a distinction that has drawn notice from investors and the startup ecosystem alike.
10 CAMPUS PRESENTATIONS LINED UP The team has confirmed presentations at ten institutions across Nagpur and Pune in the coming weeks. These are direct student onboarding drives — not administrative meetings. Campus ambassadors are recruited on the spot to carry the platform into hostel networks, department groups and college E-Cells.





- IIT Nagpur (Indian Institute of Information Technology)
- GCOE Nagpur (Government College of Engineering)
- G.H. Raisoni College of Engineering, Nagpur
- YCCE (Yeshwantrao Chavan College of Engineering), Nagpur
- Priyadarshini Institute of Engineering and Technology, Nagpur
- Symbiosis Institute of Technology, Nagpur
- Cummins College of Engineering, Pune
- Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, Pune

### THE PAN-INDIA GOAL

CampusSwap is already active across three cities — Delhi NCR, Pune and Nagpur. The founding team's stated goal is pan-India scale: to become the default student-to-student second-hand marketplace in every college city across India. India has over 1,000 universities and 40,000-plus colleges — the largest student population in the world. North India expansion is underway, with outreach at Delhi University colleges including Miranda House, Kalindi, SSCBS and Hindu College, and at GGSIPU-affiliated institutions. "Nagpur and Pune are where we prove the model. The goal after that is every city, every campus, every student in India who is buying or selling anything," said the founding team.

### HOW THE PLATFORM WORKS

Listings on CampusSwap span engineering instruments, medical equipment, electronics, hostel furniture, appliances, cycles and sports gear. A Wanted Posts feature lets buyers post what they need, with sellers responding directly. A SafeSwap Delivery feature — currently in development — will enable inter-campus shipping through logistics partners.The platform is completely free to use for all students. Government funding avenues including the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme and TIDE 2.0 are currently being explored.

# SHAINA NC : MUMBAI'S QUEEN OF DRAPES AND POLITICAL POWERHOUSE

Shaina Nana Chudasama, popularly known as Shaina NC, embodies a seamless blend of fashion innovation, political dynamism, and social commitment in Mumbai's vibrant landscape. Born on December 1, 1972, in Malabar Hill to former Mumbai Sheriff Nana Chudasama and Munira, she rose from a privileged background to become a multifaceted icon.

## Fashion Legacy

Dubbed the "Queen of Drapes," Shaina revolutionized saree styling with 54 unique techniques, earning a Guinness World Record for the fastest saree drape. She runs the Golden Thimble Boutique in Kala Ghoda, specializing in traditional sarees like Paithanis and Chanderis for celebrities such as Aishwarya Rai, while promoting ready-to-wear options for modern women.

## Political Journey

**Entering politics in 2004 with BJP, Shaina served as national spokesperson, Maharashtra treasurer, and executive council member, advocating for women's reservation and progressive policies. In 2024, she switched to Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, contested Mumbadevi (unsuccessfully), and was appointed national spokesperson in 2025, actively defending Mahayuti in 2026 BMC elections where the alliance triumphed, paving way for a mayor after 25 years.**

## Social Impact

**Through NGOs like I Love Mumbai (founded by her father) and Giants International (World Chairperson), Shaina drives cleanliness drives, tree plantation, cancer aid fashion shows, and victim support post-2008 Mumbai attacks. Her charity efforts raised millions for healthcare and disaster relief, earning awards from Lions and Rotary.**

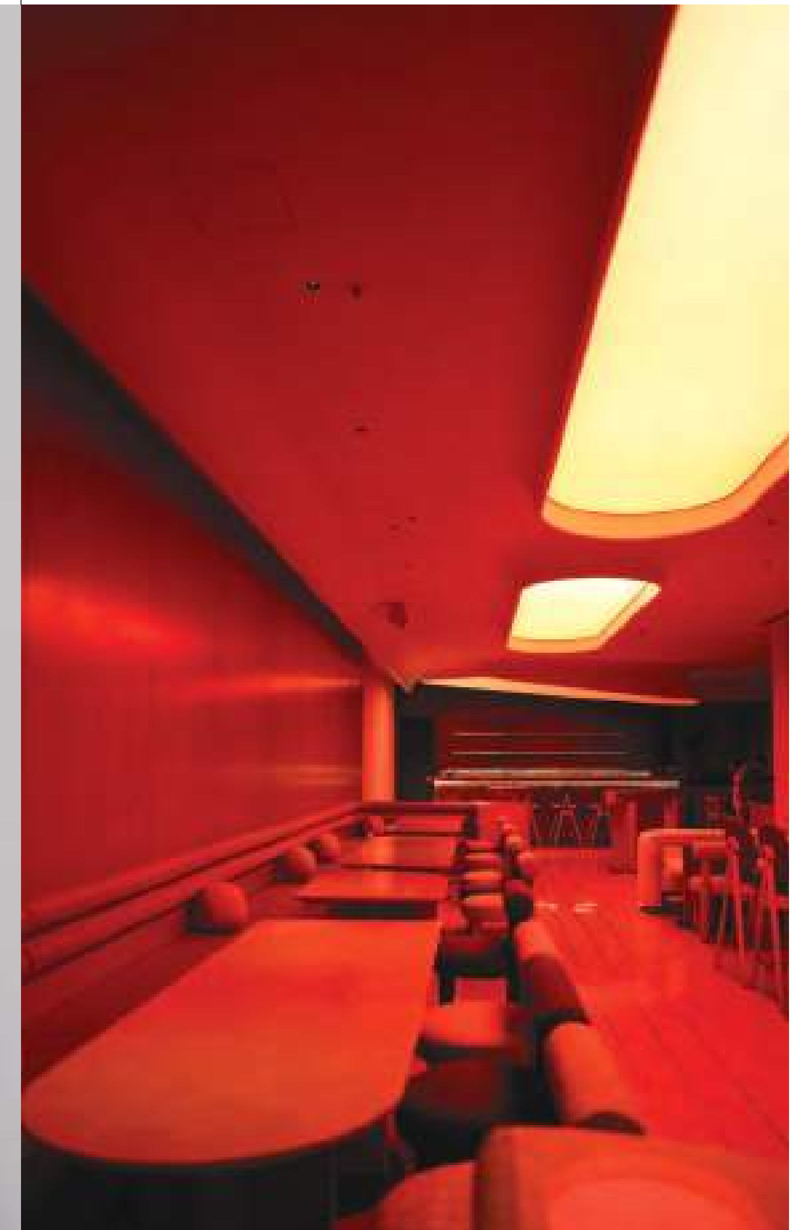
## Personal Life & Vision

**Educated at St. Xavier's College and FIT New York, Shaina is married to Manish Munot with two children, celebrating diverse festivals reflecting her interfaith roots. As a Mumbai native like you, her focus on urban development, women's empowerment, and civic governance aligns with real estate and business growth in.**

DINING | DESIGN | CULTURE

# NOTHING EXTRA EVERYTHING ESSENTIAL

BARE, Worli's new hybrid hospitality space, strips dining back to its most considered form and in doing so, creates something quietly extraordinary.



There is a particular kind of confidence in restraint. In a city where restaurants routinely compete on spectacle — the louder the concept, the better — BARE arrives in Worli doing the opposite. No gimmicks. No excess. Just a deeply considered space where food, design, drink, and art exist in what its creator calls "quiet dialogue."

Conceptualised by Pooja Raheja of Eat Drink Design — a name that has spent two decades reimagining catering as immersive, environment-led storytelling — BARE feels less like a restaurant opening and more like a philosophy finding a permanent address.

## A Space Built on Duality

Sitting at the intersection of culinary culture and design, BARE houses four distinct yet interconnected elements under one roof: a culinary-forward cocktail bar, an intimate 11-seater Chef's Table, a rotating art gallery façade, and an espresso bar. Each has its own identity; together, they form something greater.

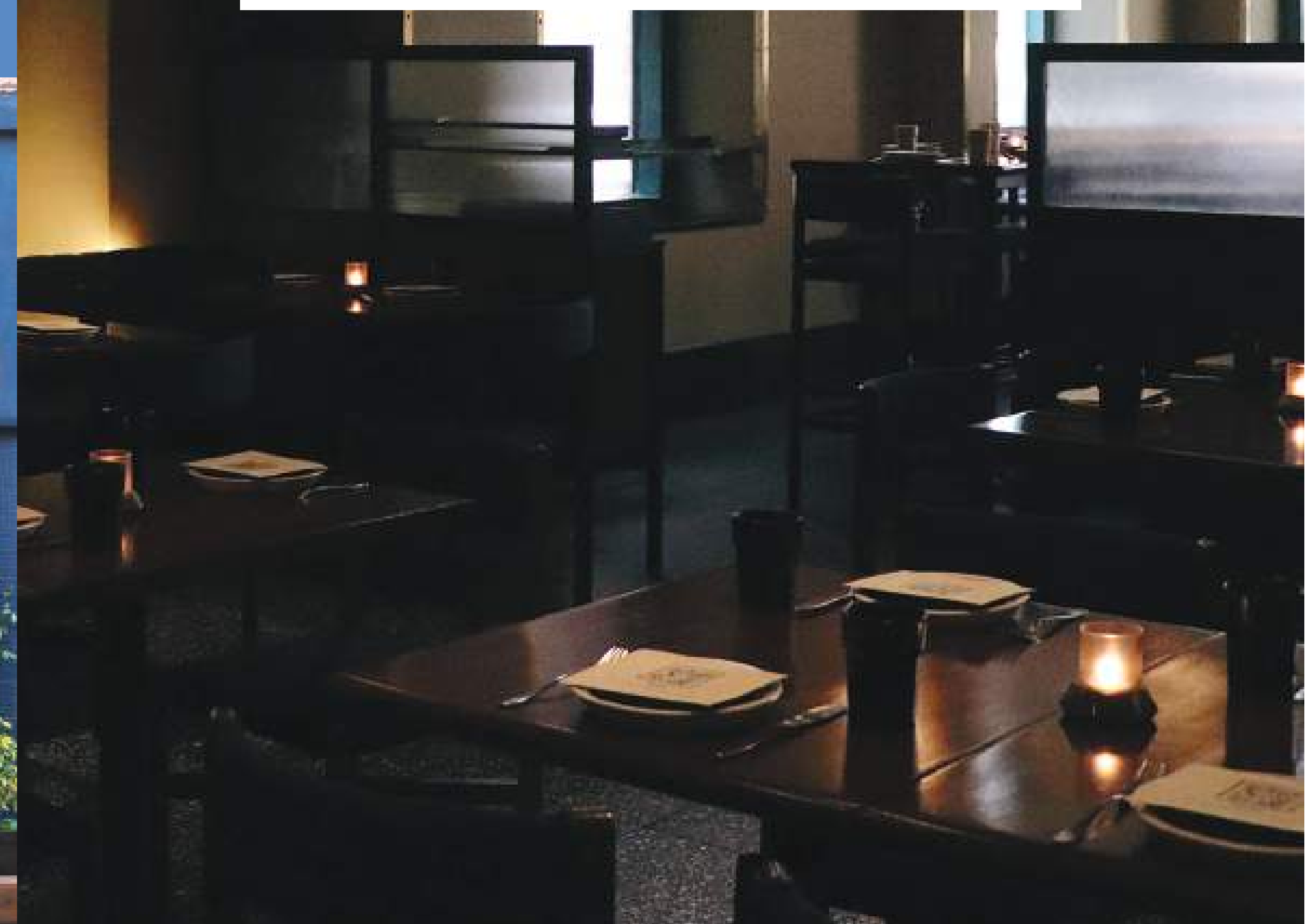
The design reflects this considered duality. The gallery-style façade, developed with A&H Colab (Amrita Kilachand and Hina Oomer Ahmed), transforms the exterior into a public-facing art experience — expressive, rotational, alive. Step inside, and interiors by Niketa Raheja shift the register entirely: quieter, more restrained, favouring materiality, texture, and calm over statement. Expression outside; intimacy within.

"BARE approaches dining as a form of curation rather than convention."

# AMERICANO: MUMBAI'S CULINARY ICON THRIVES AT FIVE

AMERICANO IS A VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOOD RESTAURANT BY CHEF ALEX SANCHEZ AND RESTAURATEUR MALLYEKA WATSA.


Since its hotly anticipated debut in March 2019, Americano remains a destination for its creative cuisine, genuine hospitality, and expertly crafted cocktails. Nestled in Kala Ghoda, Bombay's premier arts and fashion district, the dining room and bar occupy a stylishly appointed room with 20-foot ceilings and large fluted glass windows. The space reflects its locale with a brass mobile installation and elegant yet understated decor. A visionary and pioneer of farm-to-table cooking in India, Sanchez is a champion for locally sourced produce of the finest quality. His fanatical respect for ingredients is evident in the dishes he creates, where a light touch enhances the inherent flavours of the product.

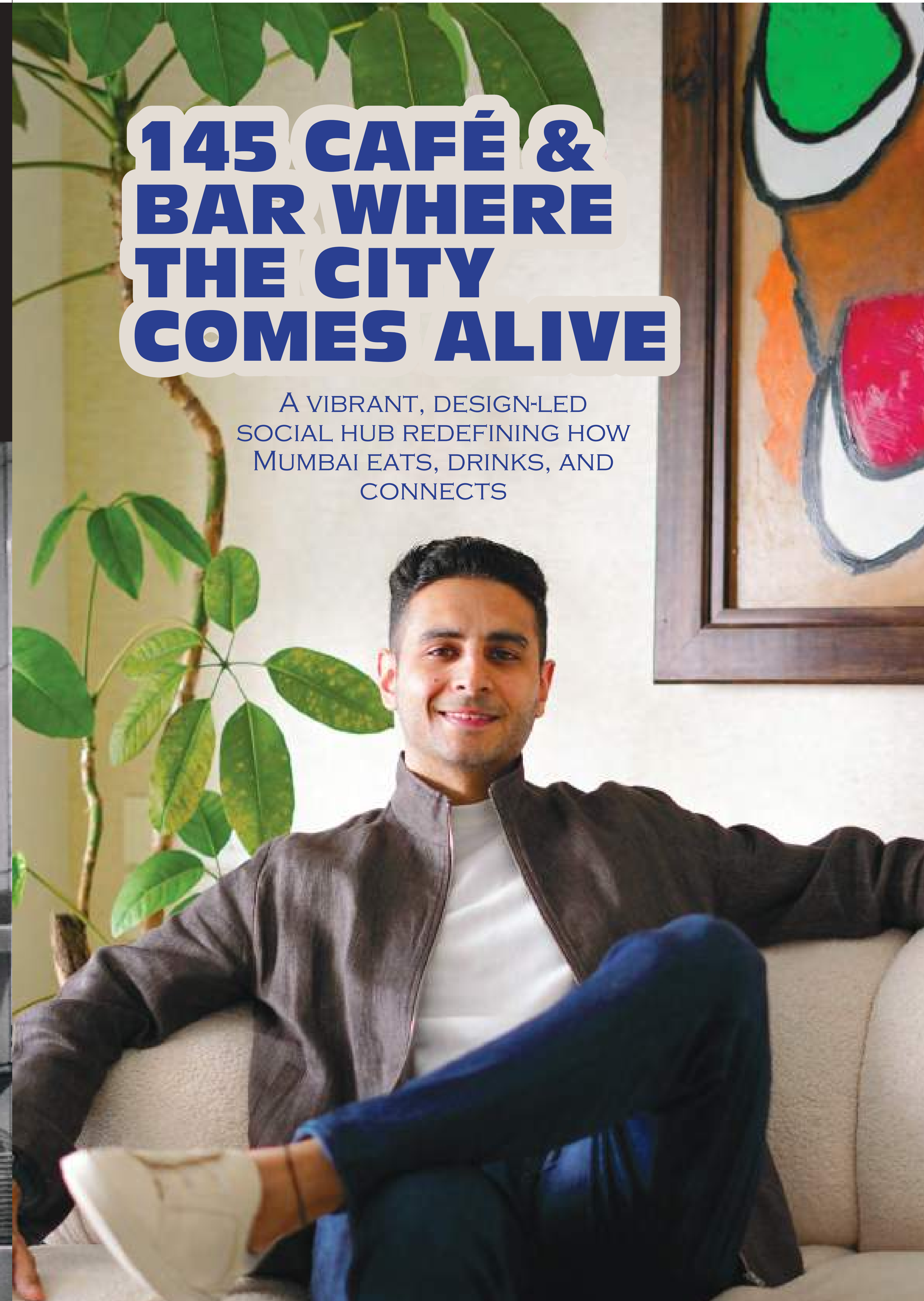


The cuisine at Americano reflects a chef's evolution: from young and ambitious, eager to display his technique; to mature and confident, leaving his ego at the door and cooking with restraint. Our menu showcases Chef Alex's unique cooking style which draws from a diverse range of flavours and techniques, resulting in food that is layered, textural, and refined without any pretence. In the five years since opening (two of which were during a pandemic), Americano has garnered much acclaim for its warm hospitality, dynamic ambiance, and unmatched food and beverage, including recognition by Asia's 50 Best Restaurants, Asia's 50 Best Bars, Condé Nast Traveller Top Restaurant Awards and the 30 Best Bars in India. Americano has redefined the way Mumbaikars eat and drink, setting a new paradigm within the national restaurant community.

**CHEF SANCHEZ'S AMERICANO: MUMBAI'S ENDURING GEM**

# 145 CAFÉ & BAR WHERE THE CITY COMES ALIVE

## A VIBRANT, DESIGN-LED SOCIAL HUB REDEFINING HOW MUMBAI EATS, DRINKS, AND CONNECTS




Ishaan Bahl is a third-generation restaurateur shaping India's modern dining culture while carrying forward one of Mumbai's most celebrated culinary legacies. As the Founder of 145 Café & Bar and CEO of Risa Hospitality, he brings together heritage, youthful innovation, and sharp business intuition, positioning himself as one of the most compelling young leaders in India's F&B landscape.

Born into the legacy of Khyber, Mumbai's 65-year-old landmark restaurant, Ishaan grew up immersed in flavour, discipline, and the art of intuitive hospitality. From the age of 12, he accompanied his father into Khyber's bustling kitchen, learning techniques, tasting dishes, and absorbing the culture of consistency and craftsmanship that defined the brand. These early experiences shaped his understanding of food as both an experience and an emotion, laying the foundation for everything he would build later. After graduating from the USC Marshall School of Business in Los Angeles, Ishaan returned to India with a journal full of global inspirations, including LA-style fries, bold sauces, and inventive desserts. Many of these ideas eventually became cult favourites at 145, including the now-iconic Animal Style Fries and Cookie Dough Pizza, which are today closely associated with the brand.

At just 22, he took over Cheval, a European restaurant owned by his family, and transformed it into 145 Café & Bar, a neighbourhood-first concept built on accessibility, energy, and modern culture. Over the last decade, 145 has grown into one of Mumbai's most recognisable youth-driven dining and nightlife brands. With five thriving locations, including a high-impact Cyber Hub outlet launched in collaboration with cricketer Suryakumar Yadav, 145 has become a staple for millennials and Gen Z alike.

145 Café & Bar is a high-energy, design-forward restobar brand built around the idea of being your "second home" in the city. Born in Mumbai's cultural hub of Kala Ghoda and now present across key neighbourhoods and cities, the brand blends great food, strong cocktails, music, and immersive interiors to create a vibrant social experience. At its core, 145 is about bringing people together, whether it is after-work unwinding, weekend scenes, or late-night conversations.

The brand is known for its eclectic, globally inspired menu spanning Continental, Asian, and Indian influences, paired with playful signature elements like freakshakes, innovative bar programs, and comfort-driven dishes. What sets 145 apart is its distinct personality in every outlet, with bold artistic spaces, curated design details, high-energy bar setups, and social gaming elements that make each location feel lively, inclusive, and memorable.

As 145 celebrates its 10-year anniversary, the brand has introduced a refreshed menu that reflects Ishaan's evolving culinary vision, with elevated flavours, stronger global influences, and a deeper culinary identity. Parallel to this, Ishaan continues to safeguard and expand the legacy of Khyber, ensuring that heritage and philosophy remain at the heart of Risa Hospitality.

His leadership across both brands has earned nearly 100 awards, reinforcing his focus on quality, guest experience, and relevance across generations. Looking ahead, Ishaan is expanding into newer verticals shaped by modern preferences, including Smackin' Burgers, which launches this December, and a new Japanese dining concept set to debut in March 2026.

With legacy behind him and innovation ahead, Ishaan Bahl stands as one of India's most exciting young hospitality leaders, globally inspired, deeply rooted in culture, and uniquely attuned to the tastes of a new generation.

# THE COURT BUILDER

Ronak Daftary didn't introduce padel to India. He and his co-founders built the infrastructure that made India take it seriously.

March-2026

There is a particular kind of founder that emerging sports markets occasionally produce — one who arrives not simply with enthusiasm for a game, but with the architectural instinct to understand what the game requires to survive. Courts. Communities. Credibility. In that order, and all at once.

Ronak Daftary is that founder. But he is also smart enough to know that no one builds a national sports infrastructure alone. When Daftary co-founded PadelPark alongside Jigar, Nikhil, and Pratik, padel in India existed as a curiosity — a sport played in pockets, whispered about by those who had encountered it in Dubai or Barcelona, but without the physical infrastructure to take root here.

What it lacked was not awareness. It was courts. Serious ones, built at scale, in cities that could sustain a competitive ecosystem around them.

Padel is the fastest-growing sport in the world. That fact is no longer contested — it is repeated in boardrooms from Madrid to Miami, in the strategic plans of global sports conglomerates. In India, in 2021, it was still a question mark.

The question was not whether Indians would take to padel. Anyone who had watched a court fill up within weeks of opening — the social format, the accessibility, the sheer addictiveness of the game — knew the answer to that. The question was whether someone would do the hard, unglamorous work of building the infrastructure before the moment arrived.

That work required land acquisition in cities where real estate negotiation is its own artform. It required importing courts from global manufacturers before domestic supply chains existed. It required educating developers, mall operators, and residential complexes on why a padel court was not a luxury amenity but a community anchor. And it required doing all of this across multiple cities simultaneously, before demand had caught up with ambition.

This is where the PadelPark founding team distinguished itself. Building a single great venue is a project. Building eighteen-plus venues across Mumbai, Bengaluru, and beyond — maintaining operational consistency, brand standards, and court quality across every one of them — is an institution. Institutions are not built by one person. They are built by founding teams with complementary strengths, shared conviction, and the discipline to hold the vision together when execution gets difficult.

**That clarity of purpose, held at the founder level, has a way of showing up in every decision made below it.**

## A SPORT ON THE EDGE OF ITS MOMENT

Indian padel is approaching an inflection point. The Asian Games 2026 will bring the sport to a continental audience. A generation of urban Indians — fitness-conscious, socially motivated, looking for something beyond the gym — is discovering that padel fits their lives in a way few sports do. The infrastructure PadelPark has built positions it to be the primary beneficiary of that moment.

But inflection points reward those who prepared for them, not those who arrived at them. Daftary and his co-founders have been preparing since before most people in India knew padel existed.

The sport is here. The courts are here. The community is here. What they have built is not just a network of padel venues — it is the foundation that Indian padel will grow from. The infrastructure of a sporting culture that did not exist five years ago and cannot now be imagined without it.

# THE FIELD OFFICER

In an age of policy papers and PowerPoint governance, Manuj Jindal still believes the most important office is the one without walls.

There is a type of IAS officer India knows well. The kind that administers from a distance — through files, circulars, and intermediaries — until policy arrives at the people it was meant to serve, diluted and delayed.

Manuj Jindal is not that kind.

On any given day, you are more likely to find him at a land revenue dispute or in a digital literacy rollout in a tribal belt, or a construction site on the edges of Mumbai where a decision he made is either working or it isn't. He goes to find out which.

In administrative vocabulary, they call this being a field officer. In practice, it means something simpler — a man who believes governance is not a desk job.

Before the IAS, he worked in international finance. That background gave him something most administrators lack — the ability to read data not as abstraction, but as signal. Numbers, for him, point toward something real happening somewhere on the ground.

He brought that precision into public service. And then, crucially, learned when to set it aside and simply listen.

## Technology as a Bridge

India's digital governance push has, in many places, created new exclusions while trying to eliminate old ones. Move a service online without ensuring access and literacy

— and you haven't simplified government. You've relocated the obstacle.

Jindal's approach is grounded in a single conviction: technology should be a bridge to the last mile, not a barrier standing before it. In tribal districts, this means literacy programmes built around what communities need, not what the government wants to deliver. In land revenue, it means removing friction that existed simply because no one had ever questioned it.

Simple philosophy. Difficult execution. Consistent results.

## Beyond the Posting

Outside official duties, Jindal has built a quiet but significant presence among UPSC aspirants  not by projecting authority, but by speaking honestly about the examination, the service, and the mental weight of both. He advocates for a mental health-first approach to preparation. His argument is straightforward: an aspirant who breaks under the pressure of the UPSC arrives at the service already depleted. The goal is not officers who survived the examination. It is officers who arrive whole — capable of empathy, built for the long haul. It is not a position the establishment always champions. He makes it anyway.