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This impressive structure in Madurai dates back to 3,500 years

In This Issue Citizen: A tribute to our customers

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Luxurious Apartments, Hyderabad

HYDERABAD'S **FINEST RESIDENCES**

A mind blowing location, unbelievable amenities, pre launch prices and a USA based developer putting all these together. 2, 3 & 4 BHK apartments.

BOOKINGS OPEN





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MD's Insight



To absorb the increasing demand, we are launching couple of residential projects in Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Hyderabad. Speaking of which, we are coming up with a new project in Ahmedabad North Enclave consisting of 600 units with all the luxury amenities you can think of. In 2015, the City of Nizam will see a new face of style and grandeur and we have named it as Hillcrest — 2/3 & 4BHK Highrise Apartments — a new addition into the luxury properties of Hyderabad.

I am thrilled to share that our Chennai township, Pacifica Aurum, won the prestigious award 'The Best Luxury Apartment Project of the Year, South Chennai' at the Siliconindia's Chennai Real Estate Awards 2014. This is a great start of the year.

One of the real estate trends for 2015 is smaller homes with best designs. People are opting for smaller sized houses without compromising on the design or the luxurious amenities. Keeping this trend in mind, we have come up with some new home décor ideas and tips for you in this edition along with other interesting topics. Enjoy the read !

RAKESH (ROCKY) ISRANI

Managing Director, Pacifica Companies risrani@pacificacompanies.com

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ew Year wishes to all our readers. New Year has arrived and we are V ready with a renewed energy in our hearts and minds. A new year means new hopes and new dreams. Looking back, I remember we began our journey in 2004 - 05 and now we are in 2015 - completing nine awesome years in India. Our customers have been our source of encouragement and inspiration. Your valuable feedback has helped us tremendously to achieve our goals. This isssue of PacBuzz is a tribute to our customers.

This year too we have initiated many projects across India. The good news is that we are venturing into commercial and other new avenues in real estate with residential being the main focus. Now that the borrowing rates have reduced, demand for residential projects has increased. People will be more at ease when buying their dream home, which was a setback earlier due to high borrowing rates.





Cover: The Meenakshi Temple Madurai

MAGAZINE OF PACIFICA COMPANIES





Citizen

This edition of the Pac Buzz is a tribute to our dear customers

Spotlight The condos at Florida a

The condos at Florida and California have been scooped up by Pacifica Companies

Senior Living Pacifica Senior Living's Forest Trace is a great option for healthy and active seniors

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Update Pacifica Tech Park launches a brand new 1500 square feet food court in Chennai



Display

Pacifica Companies has been part of some of the most prestigious Indian property exhibitions

Under Construction



Spacious villas and modern apartments await you at Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Chennai

Architecture

Tamil Nadu is known as the land of temples, the most impressive one is the Meenakshi temple

WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK

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eam Pacifica had an early morning tryst with unity Prime Minister Narendra Modi to mark Sardar Vallabhbhai as citizens turned up in large numbers for the 'Run Patel's birth anniversary. for Unity' event at Ahmedabad. An all-woman team During the flag off at around 7.30 in the morning, the CM spoke - Honorable Chief Minsiter of Gujarat Anandiben Patel, about the need for making Gujarat clean, healthy and malnutrition-Ahmedabad mayor Minaxi Patel and municipal commissioner free. Majority of the participants were government employees, D Thara, flagged off the run at the Sabarmati riverfront. Traffic officials and staff of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC), on Ashram Road came to a halt as 30,000 people jogged residents from each ward invited by counselors, staff members of down the road as part of this nationwide event, launched by police department, NGOs and anganwadi workers.



CORPORATE CONSCIENCE

AWARDS





Vikram Agnihotri, Director- Southern India receiving the award

Opening doors to LUXURY

Pacifica Companies was awarded the 'Luxury Apartment Project of the Year' at the Chennai Real Estate Awards 2014

> iliconindia's Chennai Real Estate Awards 2014 is an initiative to identify and recognise leading real estate industry professionals, who have played a vital role in the growth of real estate sector in Chennai. The awards were given to sectors such as residential, commercial and townships, for completed and upcoming projects in 2013 and 2014. Pacifica Companies was awarded 'Luxury Apartment Project of the Year — South Chennai' for the project Pacifica Aurum Phase 1.

The sixth edition of the award ceremony took place at The Accord Metropolitian Hotel in Chennai. The event saw a panel of industry leaders, media and other related associations.

Siliconindia is a 17-year-old media house with two print magazines and outline presence. It has over 6 million network members and the online newsletter reaches out to over 2.7 million in India and over 100 thousand in the USA. The print magazine is published from Fremont, California and from Bangalore, India.



BOOKINGS OPEN

C O M P A N I E S Shaping real estate globally... since 1978





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At Pacifica, we desire to offer only the best levels of service to all our customers. For us, getting a handle on how customers view our products, service and brand is of utmost importance. This edition of Pac Buzz is a tribute to our customers

THEY LOVE US

his article and edition of Pac Buzz is a tribute to all our amazing customers, the sole reason of our existence. We, in all humility, thank you for accepting us and letting us be a part of your family.

Customer feedback is paramount and helps us in determining our customers needs and tastes, particularly when a business introduces new products. Companies conduct focus groups, in-person research or customer phone surveys to determine the product features or styles that people want. Feedback helps companies determine what's important to their customers. Without feedback, a company cannot meet the product needs of the consumers. Consequently, their products are likely to fail in the marketplace. The feedback also allows companies to better understand how customers rate and use their products versus

those of their competitors.

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At Pacifica, we believe offering great client service is not only important, but also our Dharma. We constantly attempt to offer the best possible solution to a customer's wish to own a dream home, and to meet their demand of a home with world-class amenities. Pacifica strives to offer customer's amenities that are of global standard and build a well-planned community across India. We ensure that our projects help our customers to elevate their social status, besides offerieng them financial commitment and better returns on their investment. Issues like illegal property, low construction quality and high construction cost can never be associated with a Pacifica project. Our 37 years of reputation and expertise helps us to design a suitable home for our buyers. Our deep-rooted knowledge

base and insight has helped us to continually expand and add to our huge community across globe, which is our strength. Our homes are rich in design features, yet the budget never stretches a buyer's wallet. Strategically located in every city, our homes offer best return on investment. We not only build quality homes, but also take care of infrastructural development in the entire area. We design huge clubhouses equipped with the best of sporting facilities so that we help minimise the trouble customers have to go through to access their fitness needs. Customers can choose from leisure, sporting and recreation options that are within the property. Our properties are always close to the important landmarks in the city and in the vicinity of most of their infrastructure requirements, like

transport, healthcare, school, colleges and malls etc.

When a customer buys one of our homes, he doesn't just own that home. He also builds a lifelong relationship with us. We ensure that we provide customers our support at every step of buying a home, and after that as well. Keeping this in mind, we have set up systematic mechanism processes: From reaching out to customers to delivering them the right product, Pacifica plays a pivotal role. Our well-trained sales team, our transparent transactions, and our day-to-day follow-ups with customers, helps them keep abreast of the stage in which the construction is. Our contemporary architects, engineers and audit teams are everready to check the quality of our constructions since we lay utmost importance on delivering a high quality abode. We have a special NRI desk, which handles all the NRI queries, constantly updating them about tax implications and other crucial matter.

So that our customers have the right information at their fingertips, we've installed a 'Live Chat' program on our website. Customers can access the whole set of information about their dream home easily, without having to travel to our site offices. Once a customer is equipped with all the information about our properties, he is assisted by our sales team who clarify the different facets of the home buying process. We have installed plat table, 3D model home to offer customer a better idea about the property. A customer who visits our sales office, get to see sample house — both furnished and unfurnished, offering them a very clear idea of the property, what his dream home would

look like, including amenities offered and the specifications of the house. Customers are provided with detailed floor plans, pricing, etc. To ensure that our customers get a detailed overview of our properties, we train our customer service team at regular intervals, keeping them updated on the real estate market and the industry. To ensure right presentation of our properties, we frequently scrutinise and audit our customer service team. We maintain a very transparent approach as far as the payment and other transactions are concerned. Helping customers with hassle free home loans, we at Pacifica deal with every nationalised & private banks in India. All our projects are approved by banks.

we do

Our post sales services are as strong and effective as our sales, we ensure that we answer all construction related queries. Construction progress reports are sent to all our customers, including NRIs. Our customers feel at ease when they see images of under construction projects. After possession, customers can approach us with different specifications related queries, vendors details of the materials used like tiles, bath fittings and other specifications. We provide electrical & plumbing drawings of the apartments and villas, so that our customers can customise them according to their own needs. Also, only after a customer has signed the home owner checklist,

complete the handover process. Again, in all our projects, our service does not end after a successful handover. We usually maintain the society for two to three years, thereby ensuring that there is a very smooth transition from the builder to the residents. Even after that, we are in touch with residents in case they need us.



We conduct cultural programs and host fun evenings for our customers at the respective sites while launching a project or handing over the possession to customers. We have tried to keep their spirit high by hosting colourful programs, like the Carnivals in Aurum, Chennai & Madrid County, Vadodara, and Housie at YMCA, besides hosting Fancy Dress **Competition & Cooking Competition** at Green Acres & La Habitat, Ghazal & Sufiyana Night at The Meadows, Musical Nights at Reflections & Madrid County. We individually invite each customer to such events so that we can add a personal touch to the process. Besides sending out handwritten invites, SMS and email blasts, we offer some great deals, and try and keep our events exciting and full of fun and frolic.

We believe that maintaining a relationship with an existing customer is generally more cost-and-time effective than trying to find a new one. It is our promise only to get better and better so we serve you well. As far as our customers are concerned, only SKY is the LIMIT.



And now some excerpts from their love...

Gita Patel.

"My search for a beautiful home ended when I booked a villa at The Meadows. I am glad to inform you that I am truly pleased to be associated with Pacifica Companies.

Meadows

My heartfelt thanks to Mr. Virat Rathod. The service you provided exceeded all our expectations and guaranteed a continuing successful relationship in the future. He might have faced many obstacles on this project, but the way he has dealt with these obstacles has inspired all who have worked with him.

We recognise and appreciate Mr. Virat's dedicated efforts, his healthy perspective, his personal commitment to excellence, his ability to listen to others' ideas with concern and an open mind. attributes which create an environment of mutual respect in which relationships flourish. He found the time for us — and that has made all the difference!

Mr. Virat's careful attention to details is what makes him so special. He consistently goes that extra mile to make a good job, a superior one.

Few people have his kind of vision. Thank you Mr. Virat for your warmth and for taking the initiative. Success can never be achieved unless a person like like Mr. Virat has the vision and desire to initiate achieve it.

My special thanks to Mr. Vishal Detha and Mr. Utkarsh Dave for their co-operation and support. Your ability to recognise and react to opportunity results in personal and mutual success.

I look forward to continuing support from the Pacifica family. Thank you for all your efforts, and those of your staff. Wishing the Pacifica family, all the success ahead so that you touch greater heights all over the world."

Mittal & Nikhil Dalal,

"Since I am from Mumbai, I didn't realise that a beautiful place like Madrid County was possible on the dusty land of Vadodara till the time I witnessed it personally. On my visit to the site, my first look of the beautiful garden, huge open spaces, clean surroundings and the marketing office made me feel proud of what I am going to be a part of. The cheerful and enthuastic marketing staff, especially Pranav Gadhiya, added strength and support to my decision to buy a unit here, and it one of the best decisions l've made so far. Pranav helped me right through the deal process, making things easier, even when I was at remote locations. Thanks a lot Pacifica companies — you are doing an outstanding job when it comes to creating stylish and luxurious homes. Hope to continue with our good and healthy relationship. All the very best for your future endeavours."

N. SESHADRI NATH,

"Thank you for the excellent courtesies extended to me and my family when we visited AURUM on 14 December, 2014. Indeed, it was a wonderful and pleasant experience. All of us enjoyed the visit, especially the hospitality extended by your staff. I am also eagerly looking forward to having a long relationship with Pacifica."

Ankur Jain,

"I am thankful to Pacifica for giving me the opportunity to be a part of its family. For me,









trust and quality are of paramount importance and Pacifica epitomises these attributes. Hope the partnership with Pacifica will grow stronger and stronger in the coming years."

Ashish Goyal,



skills. It has been a pleasure dealing with him at this initial stage, and I hope to have the same experience in our future dealings."

Amit Tandon,

Meadows

"I would like to place on record my appreciation for Yasser, whom I met at the Gokuldham site a couple of days ago. I found him to be very committed to his work. He found ways to fulfill my requirements. I think he will always be an asset for your organisation !"

Sanjay Jain,



"It is a privilege to own a villa at the well-known project 'MADRID COUNTY" at Vadodara. The benefits of this project include its material quality, the club benefits, the service and, of course, the design and

sales team. This project was possible because of the hardworking team of architects and interior designers. Among the features I like at the project are the open areas and the greenery that surrounds it, as well as your dedication to preservation of the environment. Also, this project has Crisil rating of 6 star. I am waiting to move in."

Avoodaiappan,

"I have to thank your

team for having made my visit more meaningful. They possess all the traits of successful sales people."

Jatin Shah,

"I like Reflections because it is a good product and a value for money, besides your philosophy of offering service with a smile."

Jigar Dhabalia,

"Visiting your Madrid County site was a wonderful experience. The staff was good at explaining the features. Your customer service is superb. It appears that your staff is well-trained and has data stored on their finger tips. I have visited more than a dozen builders in the last two months, but haven't found a marketing team that is as good as yours. But I feel sad that I could not get the B-type bungalow I wanted,



due to its non-availability. Keep in

touch and appraise me about your

Pradheep Kumar,

"I booked the Villa 248 two years back and I would like to spend some time to offer my feedback about your team, particularly Nirmala with



your team on



my queries and other issues that I raise. Whenever I received an email from Pacifica, I used to think about offering my feedback to you. That time has now come. I really appreciate your team, specifically Nirmala and you for the way you have dealt with my requests and queries related to the project. I am looking forward to the same service from the Pacifica team after the handover of the villa as well.'



friendly experience."



Shashidhar,

"I was very pleased with my discussion with you during my visit to Madrid County. I do appreciate the township project that was showcased to me. I am also satisfied with the progress of the project so far. Considering all these factors, and with a hope of continued proficient services from Pacifica, I have already booked a 3BHK @ San Lucas . Thank you once again for such a wonderful discussion and offerings from Pacifica. Let's make Madrid County an ideal place to live in."

Balaji Ram,

"Let me be upfront about this project: I am impressed by the Aurum in terms of its scale and the facilities proposed. I was also impressed with the sales staff who served me, particularly Oswald James who was very polite and friendly. His firm hold on the knowledge about the Aurum project and the other projects in the area was very evident. He clearly understood all my requirements and helped me with appropriate ecommendations. He patiently answered all my questions. In all, I spent close to five hours (12 noon to 4:30 pm) at the project site and he served me with a smiling face in spite of having had to delay his lunch. My view on the project went several notches higher due to this experience."

aurum

Mukesh Maheshwari,



"The experience I underwent while booking my apartment was exciting. The clarity while disclosing the information I required was quite encouraging. The courtesy extended to me by your team was overwhelming. After my very first experience with the Pacifica team, I met them three or four times and I appreciate their help."



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience Luxurious Lakeside living
 - Spacious Residences
 - State of the art amenities
 - Retail shopping center to be developed opposite Casa Lakeside
 - Reliance Hypermarket in close proximity
 - Located at Atladara Padra Extension
 - New Flyover at OP Atladara already operational
 - Schools like Bright School & Vibgyor and Departmental stores like Star Bazaar & D Mart are located only few minutes away
 - Gated community for secure and hassle free living
 - Homes designed with utmost attention to detail
- Enjoy 17.5 acres of open space

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CITIZENS

What a YEAR!

Kumbhalgarh Bash 2014, Pacifica's annual day celebration, was a fun filled road trip with everlasting memories





t Pacifica, achievements and people are celebrated. Big or small, they are the solid proof that the work people are putting in is meaningful. No one can go through tasks and assignments for months, or even years without burning out. It is important to refill energy tanks with some recognition and celebrate hard work of the Team. Pacifica's annual day celebration was just that.

The Kumbhalgarh Bash 2014 was planned months in advance and was a grand success. The celebrations began with an early morning road trip from Ahmedabad to Club Mahindra Kumbhalgarh, Rajasthan. The resort nestled among the Aravali Hills is inspired by the exquisite art from the Rajput era.

On arriving at the venue, lunch was served at Jeema restaurant which was then followed by preparations for the Spectacular Gala Evening held at the front lawn of the property. The evening commenced with a dance performance on Lord Shiva, followed by various performances by the talented members of our team, dances of various songs, group dances, solo dances, even a salsa performance followed by a real laugh riot skit by our Vadodara team with a message and ended with a deadly horror themed fashion show. Post these amazing acts, the bar and dance floor was officially declared open.

The next morning a short excursion was organised to visit the 15th century Kumbhalgarh Fort, a world heritage site. The celebrations ended with fun activities and a company photo shoot to commemorate the function.

JVC the best **OFFICE SPACE** experience with us.

TECH PARK Chennai



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SPOTLIGHT

The condos at the St. Andrews former rental complex near West Palm Beach and multi-housing property Las Colinas in Riverside, California have been scooped up by Pacifica Companies

ocated in the heart of the Inland Empire, Las Colinas is a 148-unit, garden-style multi-housing property in Riverside, California. The Property is visible from the Riverside Freeway/Highway 91 and is located in a submarket rich with community amenities that include the Riverside MetroLink Station, Riverside Community Hospital and the Riverside Plaza Shopping Center. Las Colinas offers both affordability and convenience to residents in a region with a high demand for affordable housing. It offers spacious one, two and three bedroom floor plans that average 1,050 square feet featuring fully equipped kitchens, spacious closets and ceiling fans. The property includes 17 residential buildings and 2 community buildings spread across a 9.23 acre parcel. The community consists of two sparkling pools with sun decks, a playground, park like grounds with picnic areas and private garages. Las Colinas also offers a safe and secure community environment as limited access gates control traffic to and from the property.

Another addition to Pacifica's ever-growing list of US properties is the St. Andrews Palm Beach in Florida with 337 units. Nestled in the heart of West Palm Beach, St. Andrews Palm Beach provides affordable living in luxurious style. This community is situated on approximately sixty lushly landscaped acres and features newly renovated Mediterranean architecture, numerous individual unit upgrades, and exquisite lake views. The property is conveniently located near excellent schools and parks. A short distance away is the Wellington Green Mall and the world class shopping and dining of West Palm Beach's City Place. Living here one can enjoy easy access to I-95 and Florida's Turnpike, as well as, Palm Beach International Airport.

(FROM TOP TO BOTTOM): St. Andrews Palm Beach in Florida; Las Colinas in Riverside, California: Las Colinas consists of two sparkling pools with sun decks

THAT INSPIRES HAPPILY EVER AFTERS









Commercial space, Deesa



PACIFICA Gurgaon

Business Spaces, Gurgaor





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HILLCREST





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Madrid county

remium Villas & Apartments, Vado

casa Lakeside

Luxurious Villas, Vadodara





Premium Residences, Bangalor



A LUXURY RESORT senior community

With the finest in personal care, Pacifica Senior Living's Forest Trace is a great option for healthy and active seniors seeking recreational and social opportunities

mong the many assisted living retirement communities in Florida, one was specifically designed for residents who want to maintain their independence, but need some help along the way. That place is Forest Trace, a fully-licensed assisted living community that's part of a resort-style independent senior community located in the suburbs of Fort Lauderdale.







Situated in a private 74 acre gated enclave in northern Lauderhill, Forest Trace is centrally located in south Florida, attracting the majority of its residents from Broward, Dade, and Palm Beach counties. The property offers 322 residential units including 30 units, or 40 licensed beds, for assisted living. Spacious one and two-bedroom apartments with screened balconies, washers/dryers and 24-hours-a-day emergency response systems.

The amenities include restaurant-style dining with gourmet meals, complimentary Happy Hour cocktails in the piano lounge, robust social program including fitness classes, educational seminars, and ceramics studio. It also consists of 250-seat Jennie Grossinger Theatre, clubhouse with fitness centre, locker rooms, steam and sauna, walking trails, along with a wellness centre that has on-site nursing, therapy and medical offices.

The property is located near Fort Lauderdale on the eastern coast between West Palm Beach and Miami. The property itself is situated adjacent to a small lake, in the midst of a large residential area. It is surrounded by retail and commercial facilities that offer all types of shopping and numerous restaurants. West Commercial Boulevard is in close proximity to the property and offers a variety of restaurants, medical offices, pharmacies, small shops, and large retailers. The Woodlands Country Club and Inverrary Country Club are located only blocks from the property, offering scenic views and various lakes and water features. The Everglades begin less than four miles west of Forest Trace. One of Forest Trace's remarkable features is its central location relative to several of the area's primary expressways and roadways.

UPDATE





Lunch hour CHIC

Pacifica Tech Park launches a brand new 1500 sq ft food court in Chennai



n the bygone era, whenever there was food in the office, there would be an all-out frenzy to get the best treats. But these days, providing sustenance is the next big trend in employeeemployer relations. Not surprisingly the famous kitchens at Google and Facebook have made to numerous lists of 'offices with the best cafeterias'. Keeping up with the trend, Pacifica has just the solution for all those mid-day hunger pangs.

Pacifica Tech Park recently opened a 1500 sq. ft. multi cuisine food court at Tech-Park in Chennai. The food court is located on the Lower Ground floor and comprises of three well-equipped cafés — Kaaraikudi Annalaxmi that serves south Indian cuisine, Chill Out that serves beverages and sandwiches, and Phulke Ghar Ke doles out Indian cuisine. The restaurants can serve 2,800 people.

Pacifica Tech Park is a 1.1 million sq. ft. stateof-the-art integrated Information Technology Park developed on 7.29 acres of land in the fastest growing corridor of Chennai — the Old Mahabalipuram Road. The project caters to specific needs of the Information Technology and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) segments.





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HOME IS WHERE YOUR STORY BEGINS Phase I - SOLD OUT **Phase II - Few Units Left**





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THE REAL ESTATE BUZZ

Pacifica Companies has been part of some of the most prestigious Indian property exhibitions such as Gujarat Institute of Housing & Estate Development (GIHED) Property Show in Ahmedabad, Times Property Expo in Vadodara, and Gruhapravesham — IndiapropertyPropertyShowinChennai. Here is a glimpse of the exhibition that attracted 20,000 visitors.

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Lul;





SPARKLING DESIGNS

Rangoli competition excites and refreshes all

iwali is incomplete without a rangoli. The purpose of rangoli is decoration, and it is thought to bring good luck. As part of the festivities, the HR at Pacifica announced a rangoli competition to celebrate Diwali. Rangolimaking contest is one of the most popular competitions in the office because it involves team building activities. It is traditionally done by women but as the festivities galore, even the men get involved in this traditional art form.

The teams that participated were from various departments, namely, Finance & Accounts, Human Capital, Sales & Marketing, CPP, BD & Purchase, and Office Boys & Drivers. All participants were requested to dress in traditional Indian outfits to mark the celebration.

The competitors were given two hours to finish their designs after which they were judged by in-house head of departments. CPP, BD & Purchase Team & Human Capital Team won the 1st Prize and Sales & Marketing team won the 2nd prize in the competition.

The event ended on a sweet note with Diwali *mithais* and refreshments. **•**



INSPIRATIONAL

America's BELOVED best friend

Oprah Winfrey is a remarkable individual known worldwide for her philanthropy and sincere interest in helping people overcome challenges and achieve their dreams

'What you believe has more power than what you dream of sexual assault as an adolescent. However, Winfrey's or wish or hope for. You become what you believe." fortunes began to turn around in her teen years while she — Oprah Winfrey was living with her father, Vernon Winfrey, in Nashville, Tennessee. Vernon made his daughter's education a priority, and she became an honours student.

n 2003, Winfrey became the first African-American While in high school, Winfrey joined the speech team woman to reach billionaire status, according to and worked for a local black radio station. She eventually Forbes magazine. The American media proprietor, earned a full scholarship to Tennessee State University, talk show host, actress, producer, and philanthropist where she majored in communications. From there her career in media began to blossom. Winfrey soon became Nashville's first black female news anchor, and from there she went to Baltimore to co-anchor the 6 pm news. She became a household name mainly because of her Eventually she made her way to Chicago to host a lowrated half-hour morning talk show called AM Chicago. Within months she turned that show into the top-rated talk show in Chicago. The show was soon renamed The Oprah Winfrey Show and syndicated nationally, turning Winfrey into a millionaire.

broke through cultural, geographical and gender barriers, letting the world know it's not your circumstances, but your heart that determines how far you go in this world. daytime talk show, but also because of her perseverance and success. Winfrey has also acted and even owns her own television network. Although she is wealthy and successful now, her life didn't start out privileged as one might think.

Over the years she has offered herself as someone Early Life who has faced much difficulty in life and prevailed with a Born in poverty to an unwed teen mother in rural sense of purpose and hope. Through television, Winfrey Mississippi, as a child, Winfrey spent her first few years has been able to connect with viewers around the world as living with her maternal grandmother, Hattie Mae Lee. She she shares stories of both hardship and triumph, in turn allowing people to see the best of themselves and others was so poor that she often made Winfrey wear dresses made out of potato sacks. Winfrey was also the victim as they relate to those experiences.



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ARCHITECTURE

The 17th century MARVEL

Tamil Nadu is known as the land of temples, and the most impressive and important of all is the 3,500-year-old Meenakshi temple in Madurai



Imost all Indian art has been religious, and almost all forms of artistic tradition have been deeply conservative. The Hindu temples were developed over two thousand years and its architectural evolution took place within the boundaries of strict models derived solely from religious considerations. Therefore the architect was obliged to keep to the ancient basic proportions and rigid forms which remained unaltered over many centuries.

On the other hand, the architect and sculptor were allowed a great deal of freedom in the embellishment and decoration of the prescribed underlying principles and formulae. The result was an overwhelming wealth of architectural elements, sculptural forms and decorative exuberance that is so characteristic of Indian temple architecture and which has few parallels in the artistic expression of the entire world.

It is not surprising that the broad geographical, climatic, cultural, racial, historical and linguistic differences between the northern plains and the southern peninsula of India resulted, from early on, in distinct architectural styles. The Shastras, the ancient texts on architecture, classify temples into three different orders — the Nagara or northern style, the Dravida or southern style, and the Vesara or hybrid style which is seen in the Deccan between the other two. There are also distinct styles in peripheral areas such as Bengal, Kerala and the Himalayan valleys. But by far the most numerous buildings are in either the Nagara or the Dravida styles and the earliest surviving structural temples can already be seen as falling into the broad classifications of either one or the other.

In the early years the most obvious difference between the two styles is the shape of their superstructures. When it comes to temples in south India, the state of Tamil Nadu dominates with its many ancient, towering Dravidian masterpieces, many with brightly painted sculptures on their gopuram (towers). These temples, which display some of India's greatest temple architecture, are the backbone of Tamil culture.

The most impressive and important of south India's temples, Meenakshi temple in Madurai dates back as far as 3,500 years. The city was built around the Shiva lingam that's inside its sanctum. The temple complex covers 17 acres, and has 4,500 pillars and 12 towers. The temple's four main towers and entrances each face one of the four directions (north, east, south, and west). The tallest one, the southern tower, stretches nearly 170 feet (52 metres)



Each pillar inside the Thousand Pillar Hall has a carved monument of the Dravidian sculpture. The more prominent among the carved figures is the endless number of Yalis — a mythological beast with body of lion and head of an elephant



high. Inside, there are two main shrines one dedicated to goddess Meenakshi (also known as goddess Parvati) and the other to her husband Lord Shiva. Meenakshi's shrine, which is green in colour, houses a piece of emerald that was brought back from Sri Lanka in the 10th century.

The bottom part of the temple is made from granite, while its towers (gopuram) are made from limestone. On them are numerous sculptured and brightly painted gods, goddesses, animals, and demons. The famous southern tower was constructed in 1559. The oldest tower, which is the eastern one, was built by Maravarman Sundara Pandyan from 1216 - 1238. However, much of the work (particularly the halls and pillars) was carried out during the reign of Tirumalai Nayak from 1623-55.

There is a hall in the temple that was built by Ariyanatha Mudaliar in 1569, it has 985 carved pillars. The hall is known as the

'Aayiram Kaal Mandapam' or Thousand Pillar Hall. Each pillar in the hall is a carved monument of the Dravidian sculpture. The more prominent among the carved figures are those of Rati (wife of Kama), Karthikeya, Ganesha, Shiva as a wandering mendicant and endless number of Yalis (mythological beast with body of lion and head of an elephant). There is a Temple Art Museum in the hall where icons, drawings, and other exhibits depict the history of the temple, There is also the holy golden lotus tank and many smaller shrines. Outside this hall, towards the west, are the amazing Musical Pillars. Each pillar, when struck, produces a different musical note.

The sheer size of the temple means that there's so much to see and marvel over that you could easily spend days here. You will also see many couples waiting to be married in its corridors. Non-Hindus can wander inside the temple but they can't enter the shrines.

CHITHIRAI **FESTIVAL**

Every year in the month of April, the famous festival takes place on the streets surrounding the temple. This festival re-enacts the wedding of Lord Shiva to goddess Meenakshi. The wedding of the divine couple is regarded as a classic instance of south Indian femaledominated marriage, an arrangement referred as 'Madurai marriage'.



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he outdoors has a natural appeal to humans. The sky, earth, water, and other outdoor elements make us feel refreshed, calm, and one with the earth. How do we get these elements from the outdoors, into our indoors? The obvious way is by bringing plants into our living space. Here are some other simple ways to bring the outdoors in.

Bring in natural fibres, textures and patterns

Wicker, rattan, hemp, and jute are all materials that are Green reminds us of the earth, grass and plants. Blues are inspired by nature. Choose these materials in your furniture refreshing like water and the sky. Yellow evokes a sense of for a comfortable oasis to relax. In decor — baskets, rugs, freshness, like the sun and fresh flowers. Neutral tones such and even lampshades will bring the outdoors to your relaxing as whites, ivory, tans and beige's make your interiors feel space. Bedding, towels, cleaning products, and even paint, all natural, and clean. Use these colours on your walls, window come in eco-friendly varieties. coverings, bedding and décor. You can bring a little zing to a For the more adventurous, you can use natural flooring display of shells, coral, and starfish with a colourful backdrop instead of man-made flooring. Wood, cork, stone and bamboo in your living room. Paint the back of a cabinet an eye-catching are all flooring materials that feel warm, natural and inviting hue to make white objects pop.



(From left to right): Wood, rocks, straw and sea shells are few of the elements that you can incorporate into your everyday living to bring the outdoors in; Neutral tones such as whites, ivory, tans and beige's make your interiors feel natural and clean

under the foot. They are aesthetic, practical, eco-friendly and easy to clean. By bringing these flooring choices into your home, your body will appeal to the organic elements of natural flooring, instead of cold man-made materials.

Use elements found in nature in your décor

Rocks, sea shells, jars of beach sand, wood, and straw are just few of the elements which you can incorporate into Let in natural light your everyday living, to bring the outdoors in. While natural objects on display certainly exemplify au naturel décor, there Natural light is absolutely free and it makes humans feel wonderful! Replace heavy drapery with lighter fabrics or is something to be said for the motif. If branches and shells aren't your thing, but you want to bring a little nature to sheers. Let natural light into your home daily, and see how your décor, opt for 2-D representations of flora and fauna on the outdoors pours into your space. Open your windows and breathe in fresh air. Fresh air is essential to feel alive and at fabrics, artwork, and pillows. An abstract interpretation on silk watercolour pillows brings a layer of sophistication too. You peace. Bring the outdoors inside by installing screens in your can also add photographs and murals of these elements if you windows, and turning the air conditioning off occasionally and don't have the real thing on hand. letting in fresh air.

Use colours inspired by the outdoors

Entice your senses with outdoor cues

Woodsy incense, and floral potpourri scents are always a treat. Sounds of rain, wind, and the beach are used in luxury spas to make the body feel relaxed and in tune with nature. This same feeling can be brought into your home. The latest interior décor trend is to decorate with food. Use lemons, limes, and mint for a visual and aromatic outdoor inspiration.

TECH BU77

Automate your

Motorised window shade and automatic blinds are some of the hottest products for the tech savvy smart home buyer

> he ability to control your shades with a smart phone, or have them automatically open or close based on timers or pre-programmed conditions is not only a cool home feature, but it also saves time and energy. You can even open and close the blinds by simply using an app. The Platinum

App is a unique window covering technology that is available on iPhone, iPad and iPod touch devices. The app is simple to connect. All that's needed is a Platinum bridge kit that easily connects to your WiFi router, and a repeater that goes in the rooms where you'd like to operate the shades with the app. After that's done, download the app and you're ready to go!

Motorised shades and blinds can be part of a complete custom home automation system. And each room can be programmed to run its own scenes in its own way, depending on how the room is used.

BEDROOM

Some people have trouble waking up in the morning, especially when the bedroom blinds are keeping the room dark. Motorised window coverings can be programmed to automatically open when your alarm goes off or open at sunrise (based on an astronomical clock). Conversely, if you need the blinds closed when you're getting dressed, you can program them to automatically give you privacy when you exit the shower.

LIVING ROOM

You can insulate your living room from the glaring sun by setting your shades to automatically

close in the afternoon, when the sun is shining brightest during the warmest time of the day, and open when the sun has moved away. If you're worried about rugs, furniture or art fading from sun exposure, automated shades can keep those damaging rays away without you having to be home.

DINING ROOM

Few things can ruin a pleasant meal like the sunlight blinding you while you're trying to eat lunch with your family. Set your dining room shades to close at lunch time. They can open automatically an hour later if you like, or just stay closed.

ENTERTAINMENT ROOM

If you have a dedicated home theatre or media room, you don't want any sun washing out the picture on your flat panel TV. Automatic blinds can be programmed to close at the same time you press the play button to watch your favorite movie. If you're not ready for that kind of integration yet, a simple app or remote-controlled shades can also make it easier to create the right atmosphere.

HALLWAYS AND SPECIAL WINDOWS

Many modern (and classic) homes feature windows in high, out of the way areas. These are nice design features, especially if they capture the morning sun. But they can also be impossible to manage with manual shades or blinds. In the absence of a ladder, motorised shades are not only the best, but are also the only way you can control the light from those high and out-of-the-way windows.



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HUMOUR



Boss to an employee: Do you believe in life after , Death?

Employee: Certainly not, there's no proof of it

Boss: Well, there is now After you left early yesterday to go to your uncle's funeral, he came here looking for you

KIDS' LITTLE INSTRUCTIONS ON LIFE

- Never trust a dog to watch your food. Patrick, 10 years old
- When you want something expensive, ask your grandparents.
- Matthew, 12 years old
- Wear a hat when feeding seagulls. Rocky, 9 years old
- Sleep in your clothes so you'll be dressed in the morning. Stephanie, 8 years old
- Never try to hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk. Rosemary, 7 years
- Never ask for anything that costs more than five dollars when your parents are doing taxes. — Carrol, 9 years old
- Never bug a pregnant mom. Nicholas, 11 years old • Don't ever be too full for dessert. — Kelly, 10 years old
- When your dad is mad and asks you, 'Do I look stupid?", don't answer him. — Heather, 16 years old
 - Never tell your mom her diet's not working. Michael, 14 years old
 - Don't pick on your sister when she's holding a baseball bat. — Joel, 12 years old
 - When you get a bad grade in school, show it to your
 - mom when she's on the phone. Alyesha, 13 years old • The two places you can always feel safe is church and
 - your grandma's. Becky, 8 years old



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