



Monumental Marvels

"...But a few understand that building is a great symbol we live in our minds, and existence is the attempt to bring that life into physical reality, to state it in gesture and form. For the man who understands this, a house he owns is a statement of his life."

— Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead*

Architecture defines a space. It is the body and soul that forms the identity of a building, locality, town, city, or nation. Places are often associated with the surrounding monuments, iconic buildings, landscapes, places of worship, and even the bylanes. For any enthusiast, merely taking a bus ride or a stroll in the old and new parts of a city can be a diverse experience. From older minimalist designs to lavish glass-tinted buildings, from *chowkhats* and *jharokhas* to façades, from high-rises to small houses with grand courtyards, and from heritage or art deco to planned townships, there is so much to see and explore. And, if the places are an amalgamation of old and new, consider cities like Varanasi or Delhi, then it is a double delight. Each unique style, building materials used, patterns, and overall vibes reflect the unique stories of the era they would have been built in. They also tell us a lot about the needs, and aesthetic and design senses of the people who would have owned or built them.

The same goes for a country. Its iconic buildings or structures are the ones that make a mark on the travellers who come from far and wide. They are mostly used as representational images of the country on the internet and in publications. Such is the monumental importance of architecture.

Through this issue of *Yojana*, we have tried to understand the vision and perspectives behind the iconic works done in the field of architecture and where they stand today. Eminent professionals have shared their valuable viewpoints and insights into making of these architectural marvels from brick and mortar. They have also dwelled upon how urban spaces are shaping up in modern times and what challenges of development lie ahead of us in the light of sustainability, rising population, and changing demographics and lifestyles. Also, how people around can be engaged and made a part of these processes and stories through active participation and community building.

India is at the cusp of transformation on various fronts. This includes redefining the identity that the nation has been associated with through its colonial past. The same is envisioned in the recent redevelopment projects including at the Central Vista in the capital city of New Delhi. There have been multiple iconic developments in this regard coinciding with the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav that instill pride among the people including the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, Kartavya Path, and Statue of Unity.

We are hopeful that this issue of *Yojana* will encourage its readers to venture out with an appreciative eye for detail, explore these marvels of architecture and design that are around us and discover the stories behind them. □

