

# Innovative and functional

Window balconies overcome the mandatory building bye-laws to fulfil the necessity of a balcony, write **A.B. REDDY AND ANOOSHA BALMOORI**

In a residential building, people have the comfort to enjoy balconies attached to bedrooms, dining and kitchen. Specially those attached to kitchen and dining halls come handy for different utilities such as dish washing, placing washing machine and drying clothes. And in some cases, they too get converted as store room sort of facility and help the dweller keep away things that are not part of daily use.

With the coming of apartment culture, balconies have become a necessary in urban areas. Usually the balconies protrude into the setbacks all around. However, after implementation of G.O. No.86 and 171 (dated 03-03-2006 and 19-04-2006 of MA & UD (M) dept. Of A.P.), the practise has been discontinued.

As per the bye laws No.12 of the 86 G.O., 'No balcony projections or corridor shall be permitted beyond the setbacks i.e., projecting within the mandatory open spaces in case of non-high rise buildings. These, if provided for, shall be set back as per the minimum mandatory open spaces and the setback shall be clear from the edge of the balcony or corridor'.

To address this shortage of balconies, came the invention of window balconies. They are not bay windows, but, fabricated with wrought iron square sections a cage like metal frame projected out some 2 feet same as the chajjas, from the window, cover-



**NEW FEATURE:** Window balconies are catching up in the city.

ing full width and height and welded to the anchored rods into the wall.

This type of innovation seems to be catching up and can be found in different parts of

the city. It also shows how the mandatory building bye-laws are overcome to fulfil the dire necessity of a balcony.

It can be said that these window balconies will soon

become a common architectural feature in every city of the State in coming years.

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# Making a favourable impact on water

Managing the waste well frees much of the ground-water from contamination and makes it available for other uses, says water expert **S. VISHWANATH**

The recent problems arising out of the pollution from the garbage dump sites of the city and the directions coming from the High Court have shown that the city and its residents will need to respond more in terms of 'recycling and reuse in my backyard' rather than an 'out of sight, out of mind' approach. Many apartments are now turning around to segregating waste from households into bio-degradable, recyclable and medical/disposable waste and treating it appropriately. Composting and bio-gas generation have emerged as increasingly useful approaches to recover nutrients and energy from 'waste'.

Recycling and reuse has one of its most favourable impact on water, both surface and groundwater. Unmanaged landfills leach into the ground, rendering the soil unfit, as well as polluting groundwater which is already a scarce resource. Managing waste well frees much of the ground-water from contamination and makes it available for other uses.

The city too is rolling out new water connections from the Cauvery 4<sup>th</sup> stage phase 2 wherein it will re-

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ceive 500 million litres of water per day additionally. Around 300,000 new connections are likely to be given shortly. The city utility is insisting that for most of the new connections a rainwater harvesting system is a must. This will bring an overall 400,000 rainwater harvesting systems to the city thus turning rainwater into a useful resource when properly and correctly implemented.

### Simple rules

The rules for rainwater harvesting are simple. For every square metre of roof area create a 20-litre capacity for storage or recharge.

For every square metre of paved area create a 10-litre capacity for storage or recharge. If you make a recharge well make it at least three metres deep. The use of a filter is optional and not compulsory. Rainwater can also be led into an existing sump or a borewell too. A process of self-certification and submission to the utility is also enough.

The city of Bangalore

has already the single largest number of solar water heater installations and that is progressing at a further rapid pace. It also has the single largest number of modern earth buildings in India. These are most eco-friendly.

### The wish-list

The city has, therefore, to aspire to be the first in India in all these fronts: solar water heating, the number of rainwater harvesting installations and the number of independent buildings and apartments recycling waste and composting it or turning it to energy.

At a larger level Bangalore can also be the city with the most number of surface water bodies revived and rehabilitated. Our city fathers must instil this pride and drive into an already aware citizenry a positive force for solutions. There is enough negativity in the air otherwise. A virtuous cycle reinforcing livelihoods and the environment is needed.

A combined force of citizens and institutions is unstoppable as the city of Curitiba or Bogota has shown or as has Surat. Will we get there?

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## CREDAI raises hope

Recently, the Secretary of Banking, Ministry of Finance, agreed to look into the problems faced by the real estate industry and work towards reducing the cost of funding through banks and financial institutions.

This is following a meeting with CREDAI in New Delhi.

Pradeep Jain, Chairman, CREDAI, said, "We had a very cordial discussion. We raised the various issues being faced by developers across the country in terms of high cost funding and escalating cost of material which adversely affect the cost of housing."

With these positive developments, CREDAI is hopeful that a lasting solution will be worked out.

The Banking Secretary has also promised to have a detailed discussion on these matters to work out on detailed roadmap on how the real estate industry can benefit and provide affordable housing.

CREDAI said the revival of the real estate industry will rejuvenate the economy, since realty supports 250 industries, generates employment and contributes 11 per cent of GDP.

The organisation has also written an open letter to the Prime Minister and set a 10-point agenda of action for taking the nation on an accelerated growth path while solving the housing problem faced by millions of people across the country.

# Use Shahabad stones in combo

Generally available in grey shades, they lasts long without surface blemishes and are easy to maintain, says architect **SATHYA PRAKASH VARANASHI**

The idea of 'local' is important in ecological architecture; hence any attempt to promote an outstation material can raise eyebrows. However, certain attitudes like aesthetics, aspiration or cost reduction can justify outstation materials, if done judiciously. This argument can support the idea of getting marbles from Rajasthan or equally good stones from Andhra Pradesh.

What do we get to see if we walk into an old restaurant? Possibly, a chess board pattern of grey and black tiles on the floor, while the restaurant kitchen could be finished with only the grey stone.

Many public buildings built in the near past also exhibit this floor pattern. They are made of Shahabad stone, grey in colour and Cuddapah stone, black in colour.

Shahabad town in Gulbarga district is a centre for Shahabad stone activities. Shahabad is a variety of limestone from this part of Karnataka bordering Andhra Pradesh. Easy to work with and economical, traditionally it has been popular in public buildings. Being fairly hard, it lasts long without surface blemishes. Generally available in grey shades, the neutral colour helps in masking dust and easy maintenance.

We also get Shahabad in chocolate colour, which ap-



**EQUALLY GOOD:** Cuddapah stone offers a great contrast at an affordable price..

pears very rich. Both the variations can be used with full polish to get a fine look or less polish for a rustic appearance. Stones are cut into tiles 1 ft. x 1 ft. to lay in single or mixed patterns. A longer length, needed for staircases, can also be procured.

In total colour contrast to the above are Cuddapah stones, again from Andhra Pradesh, with the place name extended to the material.

With its near-black colour, Cuddapah offers a great contrast at an affordable price. Comparatively softer, it is safe to use it in conjunction with Shahabad or in areas of lesser wear and tear.

Cuddapah tiles tend to look good after mirror polishing, but appear slightly dull after years of usage. With its tendency of surface layering and pitting, it may not be ideal in all contexts, but goes well

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with rustic needs and other uses like storage shelves or counter tops. Flooring finished with unpolished Cuddapah side on top creates a textured look, to contrast with the possibly smooth looks elsewhere.

Eco-friendly architecture is more theme-specific than material-specific. After all, materials are among the visible components of sustainable architecture, but they come at the end of a decision chain.

The idea could be, to begin with, to build natural, hence need natural floor. Coupled with desires like durability, stone may get shortlisted. Local or outstation stone becomes the next debate, which leads to the specific type of stone. In a way, the starting point is not stone, but being natural.

This note becomes important here, following the possible feeling that Green Sense is promoting materials for eco-build. It of course does so, aiming at sensitive end products, but starting from a deep concern for the sensitive ecological process.

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# Breaking the green monotony

Caladiums add resplendence to the courtyard, not by their flowers, but by their exquisite foliage, writes **N.CHANDRAMOHAN REDDY**



**GARDEN DECORATOR:** Caladiums can be grown in the partial shade of open, high-branched trees. - PHOTO: N. CHANDRAMOHAN REDDY

That a profusion of blooms breaks the green monotony of garden is a commonly held notion. Caladiums break this notion by adding resplendence to the courtyard, not by its flowers, but by its exquisite foliage. Unlike flowering plants which demand bright sunlight, Caladiums will make do with indirect light.

Caladium, unparalleled in the plant world for its showy foliage, is a genus of about a dozen species of tuberous-rooted tropical perennials. Native of Tropical America and West Indies and belonging to the family Araceae, they are also known by the common name 'Heart of Jesus' and 'Angel Wings'. The name Caladium is derived from the Malay word 'Kela-di' meaning plant with edible roots, after some similar plants that have edible tubers.

### Features

Leaves are long-stalked, large, ovate to elliptic, broad, arrow to heart shaped, papery-thin with explosion of whites, greens, reds and pinks - mottled, veined and striped with prominently coloured mid-ribs and contrasting margins. The leaves are displayed on the tip of long stalks that grow directly from the tuber. Flowers are inconspicuous. There are

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two basic types of caladium cultivars-- fancy-leaved and lance-leaved. Fancy-leaf caladiums have broad heart-shaped leaves borne on long erect petioles. Lance-leaf caladiums have narrow, thick and elongated leaves on short stalks, producing a more compact plant. Generally, lance-leaf cultivars produce more leaves and are ideal for hanging baskets as well as for small pots.

### Gardening

Caladiums are grown in various garden locations for their long-lasting, colourful foliage. Either in a container, in garden-beds or on a border, they provide colour to the garden throughout the warm season with very little cost and maintenance. They are wonderful bright and multi-coloured splashes in a shade garden. Caladiums are excellent bedding plants for shade and partial shade locations. They can be paired nicely with other foliage plants. Most of the Caladiums used in garden decoration are hybrids and cultivars of . Some of the popular cultivars of are - Red Flash, White Queen, Candidum, Miss Muffet, Rose Bud, White Christmas, Summer Rose, Blaze, Pink Cloud, Aaron, White Wing,

Pink Beauty, Fire Chief, Red Frill, Pink Gem, Moon Light, Red Flare, Pink Symphony, White Queen, Pink Cloud, Galaxy etc.

### Care and propagation

Growth medium for caladiums should be slightly acidic, porous and contain plenty of organic matter. They do best with warm weather and bright but indirect light. But the leaves last a few months before they start to die back during winter and subsequently the plant goes dormant. When they die back, the tubers shall be saved and replanted next spring.

Growth medium should have adequate moisture-holding capacity and also good drainage for better growth of Caladiums, as they require relatively higher amounts of water. If allowed to wilt, caladiums may lose leaves and go dormant. They take much time to re-sprout. Light intensity in the growing area is important, since most cultivars do not develop proper colour unless they are grown under optimum light. Lesser light will cause undesirable stretching of petioles, oversized leaves, and unsightly plants. Outdoor Caladium plants prefer partial shade and this will allow them to produce larger and more brightly coloured

leaves.

Caladiums can be grown in the partial shade of open, high-branched trees. They will perform reasonably well in almost full-shade, but the colour may not be as outstanding. Caladiums need protection from full-sun for the best growth and colour, but some of the newer cultivars tolerate exposure to full-sun for two to three hours daily. Caladiums require moderate feeding with slow release fertilisers during growth phase for more and healthy leaves. Caladiums can be propagated through division of tubers. Cut the tuber into sections so that each contains at least one eye or knob. Caladiums are commercially propagated through tissue culture.

### Pests

Although Caladiums are carefree growers, they are susceptible to tuber rot, leaf spot, nematodes, mealy bugs, whiteflies, aphids and spider mites. However, these pests usually do not become severe. Preventative application of broad spectrum fungicides and normal pest-management practices can solve these problems.

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# Kurlon launches 'New Spinekare'

A new mattress, positioned as a therapeutic mattress has been launched by Kurlon Limited. Made of memory foam, rubberised coir and bonded foam which is meticulously designed and scientifically developed, 'New Spinekare' is the latest product which promise to take care of ergonomic requirement of body.

In a press release issued here, the company say it provides necessary support to back and spine using Zero Pressure Point Technology (ZPP). It is specially meant for professionals who undergo long strenuous and exhausting work hours or those suffering from back and neck discomfort.

According to the press release, 'New Spinekare' priced approximately at Rs.27,000 for queen size is first of its kind mattress which is made of memory foam with therapeutic and healing benefits. The zero pressure point technology embedded in the mattress help body to attain a



**CURATIVE:** Made of memory foam, rubberised coir and bonded foam, the product is positioned as a therapeutic mattress.

natural shape the moment one lies down on it giving the back and spine the necessary support that relaxes the body. With the increasing stress levels, it is essential that hu-

man body gets relaxed good night's sleep, says Kurlon Chairman and Managing Director, T Sudhakar Pai. "Keeping this need in mind and specially those who deal

with body discomfort, we have launched 'New Spinekare' that not only relaxes the body but also revitalises blood circulation to alleviate back and neck pain," he adds.