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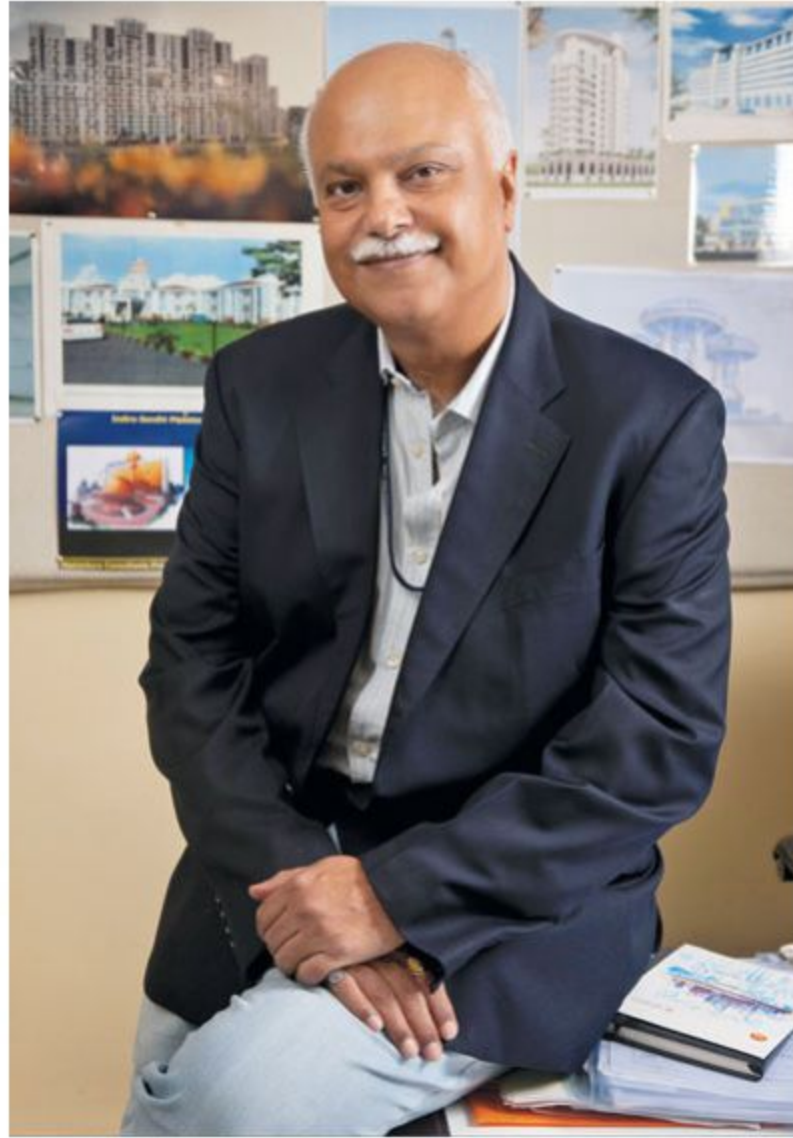
SAILESH MAHIMTURA

The Structural Master

You can count Mahimtura Consultants a leading cog in the wheel for those responsible for the awesome skyline of Bombay, now changing faster than ever. And as Mentor of the 64-year company, second-generation owner, Sailesh Mahimtura, its 56-year-old Civil Engineer can take a bow. But that may not happen, for Sailesh is too modest at heart to draw the spotlight on him in any way. He prefers to remain in the shadows, focusing his energy instead, on the task at hand, giving of his best, with humility and utmost sincerity.

And what is the current task? Well, there are so many ongoing construction projects that it would seriously take us pages and pages to just list them out! But look around you, everywhere, anywhere, in Bombay, Delhi, Noida, Bangalore, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Baroda, and you will see that the structural engineers are Mahimtura. Even with offices in nine cities of India (plus one in Dubai) and 400 engineers and draftsmen scurrying around the country we are baffled how they manage. And we are not even taking into account the overseas projects that are underway. Or the heritage structures that they restore.

The interesting aspect of structural engineering work is that it offers you many challenging opportunities. Projects can be as versatile as clients and as creative as the architects involved. And Mahimtura Consultants have been there, built that! From small dream houses to high-rise structures, residential, commercial, industrial. Covention centres to entire townships. Markets, malls, theatres, multiplexes. Hotels and hospitals to religious and educational institutions. Highways, bridges, flyovers to massive elevated car parks. Airports and wharfs, too. Phew! And to think, until we got talking to the man, all that we knew was that he was responsible, along with Hafeez Contractor, in making Niranjan Hiranandani's dream project at Powai come true...



When you express admiration at the company portfolio, all that Sailesh does, is give a smile. He speaks softly, very clearly and gently. "I love my job. I am a very thorough person, very exacting, very accurate. I am aware of my responsibility. I can't afford mistakes happening. A tiny mistake will mean hundreds, thousands of lives, unlike say a surgeon, who God forbid, if he does make a mistake on the operating table, kills one person. The enormity of the nature of our work does not elude me and I am very respectful and mindful of that fact."

Well, if we have to draw parallels, structural designing is like a human body. You want it to look good on the outside, but if your muscles are weak and your joints creak and you have a balance and alignment issue, what good is it! Great structures are made to last for many lifetimes.

And since 1949, this company has been creating milestones for itself, winning awards and accolades, delivering one nugget after another. And thanking them are clients across the spectrum – construction companies like the Lodha Group, Mittal, Hiranandani, Raheja, Kukreja, Akruti Nirman, Conwood Dynamix, Panchshil, Godrej Properties, Tata Housing to Mantri Developers. There is also Colgate, Bayer, Siemens, Sony Entertainment, Bennett Coleman to Crompton Greaves. Citibank, RBI, Dena and Central Bank. As also Airport Authority of India, CIDCO, MMRDA, MSRDC, Gas Authority of India, HPCL, IOCL... the list is exhaustive...

Moving on to the good life! Sailesh Mahimtura is a foodie and a sports enthusiast. And he has been forced (after a health scare) to find a balance between work and pleasure. So you find him – a family man all the way – taking off to the Maldives, with wife and daughter in tow, for a some diving. Or to the nearby hills of Mahabaleshwar for long treks. Playing squash was his forte, but now he sticks to playing his guitar. "Yes, I do take time off for myself now, unlike earlier. And I discovered the joys of diving about four years ago. It's so calming being underwater, watching all that marine life." When asked if it isn't scary, he answers in the negative. "Not, at all. Besides, if you get anxious, you make mistakes. Anxiety makes things go wrong. And down there you know you are responsible for your own life. Oh, it's beautiful."

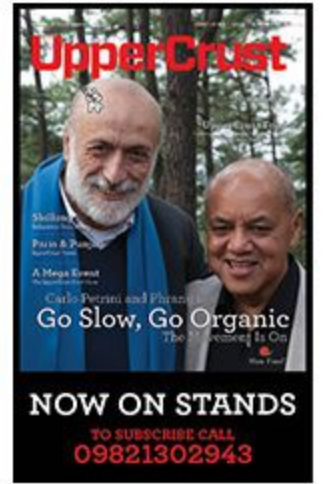
Sailesh travels a fair bit, site visits keep him busy. So on these trips he discovers good places to eat. Which don't have to be high end or snooty. But at home in his city, a tiffin goes with him in his car, every day. And everywhere. So if he is at a client's office and it is lunch time, his driver will fetch it for him and Sailesh will happily sit and eat with them, sharing the loot. But there are days when he will simply send for some 'take away'. His office is in the heart of foodie Bombay at Fort and they have menus of all the restaurants in the business district, neatly filed. The tried, tested and tasted 'items' prominently marked with a tick.

And yet other times, he will just call Hafeez Contractor, whose office is barely 100 metres away and the two friends will amble along Flora Fountain deciding what the mood du jour is and tuck into a thali, or fish curry rice or mutton biryani.

A fine balance indeed, between form and structure.

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