ISSUE **17** - MARCH 2025

Ceylon Institute of Builders

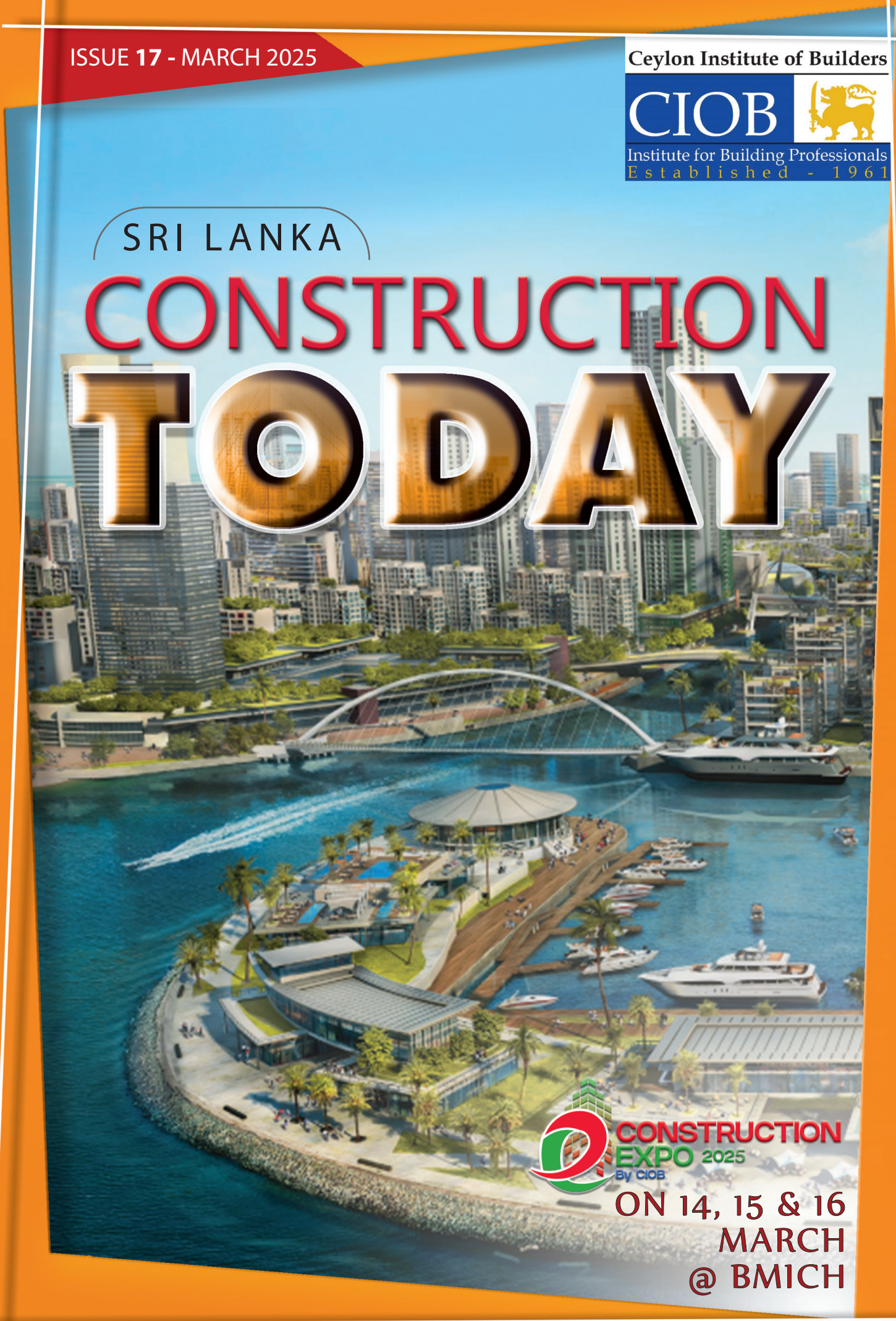
CIOB

Institute for Building Professionals

Established - 1961

SRI LANKA

# CONSTRUCTION TODAY



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SRI LANKA CONSTRUCTION TODAY

Issue 17 - March 2025
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Printer
Imashi Prakashana
96 A, Wanatha Road,
Gangodawila, Nugegoda.

Publisher
Ceylon Institute of Builders

# Ceylon Institute of Builders

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# Editor's Note

The construction industry is not just an economic driver; it is the backbone of national development. Roads, bridges, railways, water supply projects, and urban infrastructure are not merely structures of concrete and steel—they are the arteries that keep our economy alive. Despite its critical role, the construction industry in Sri Lanka has faced an uphill battle over the past few years, navigating through economic downturns, policy uncertainties, and financial hardships. While we entered 2025 with the hope that the new budget would breathe life back into this sector, the reality is starkly different.

Despite the obstacles, there is still reason for optimism. The government's commitment to infrastructure projects, albeit at a reduced scale, demonstrates that construction remains a priority. Additionally, the current administration has emphasized anti-corruption measures and good governance, which, if effectively implemented, could lead to better transparency in project allocation and funding.

As an industry, we remain hopeful that policymakers will recognize the urgency of the situation and take proactive measures to strengthen the sector. The road ahead may be difficult, but with strategic intervention, increased investment, and collaborative efforts between the government and private sector, there is still a possibility to turn 2025 into a year of recovery rather than further decline.

The construction industry has always been resilient. It has survived economic recessions, political instability, and financial crises. Now, it needs the support of the government and policymakers to ensure its survival. The coming months will be critical in determining whether Sri Lanka's construction industry can regain its footing or if it will continue to shrink under financial strain. The message is clear: the government must step up its efforts. The future of the construction industry, and consequently the nation's economic stability, depends on it.

At Sri Lanka Construction Today, we remain committed to advocating for the industry, providing a platform for dialogue, and highlighting the voices of industry leaders who are tirelessly working towards a sustainable future. Let 2025 be the year where decisive action is taken to restore the construction industry to its former strength. Let us not just build structures, but a stronger, more resilient economy for generations to come.

# CONSTRUCTION EXPO 2025 BY CIOB

## MARCH 14, 15 & 16

## 2025 @ BMICH

The **Ceylon Institute of Builders (CIOB)**, the premier professional body representing Sri Lanka's building and construction sector, is proud to announce **Construction Expo 2025 by CIOB**, scheduled to take place from **March 14th to 16th, 2025**, at the S**irimavo Bandaranaike Memorial Exhibition Centre, BMICH, Colombo.** Event Management by **Event Max Exhibitions,** this flagship exhibition will bring together leading industry professionals, decision-makers, and innovators under one roof.

CIOB plays a vital role in shaping Sri Lanka's construction industry, comprising a membership base of construction companies, architects, engineers, and allied professionals. The institute is affiliated with the **Council of Research and Innovation in Building and Construction, Netherlands,** and actively contributes to the advancement of modern building practices, sustainability, and policy advocacy.

**A Premier Platform for the Construction Industry**

**Construction Expo 2025 by CIOB serves as the most comprehensive industry showcase,** featuring the latest **technologies, products, and services** in the building and construction sector. Attendees can explore **cutting-edge innovations,** connect with **leading experts and stakeholders,** and discover **business opportunities** in a dynamic networking environment.

The exhibition will feature:

- ✓ **Latest construction technologies and sustainable solutions**
- ✓ **Participation from industry leaders, key stakeholders & decision-makers**
- ✓ **Opportunities for networking, knowledge sharing, and collaborations**
- ✓ **Innovative product showcases and live demonstrations**
- ✓ **Trade visitors from Sri Lanka and international markets**

**Industry Commitment to Growth & Sustainability**

CIOB remains committed to **upgrading industry knowledge** and **promoting environmentally friendly construction practices.** In line with its strategic initiatives, CIOB recently developed the **'Roadmap for 2024 for the Construction Industry',** which was presented to the Government of Sri Lanka. The organization continues to play an advisory role in shaping national construction policies.

**Construction Expo 2025** by CIOB is part of CIOB's broader efforts to enhance the industry, alongside key annual programs such as the **World Construction Symposium, Green Mark Accreditation Program, and Annual Sustainable Construction Awards.**

At the launch held at Shangri-La, Colombo, the industry stakeholders were felicitated for the support extended for the exhibition held in 2024 and they joined with a keen interest for the exhibition in 2025

**Strategic Partnerships & Key Sponsors**

CIOB is proud to collaborate with **St. Anthony's Ventures Limited** as the **Main Sponsor for Construction Expo 2025.** Other **major supporters** include: **Tokyo Cement Group, Alumex PLC,**

**Hayleys Fentons Ltd** …and many other key industry stakeholders who are joining this year's exhibition.

**Construction Expo 2025 by CIOB** is the **must-attend** event for professionals looking to stay ahead in the evolving construction industry. Secure your participation today and be part of Sri Lanka's premier construction exhibition!


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# Current status of The construction Industry

Construction Expo is reflected as the Sri Lanka's most intensive construction industry and home building allied exhibition. This is the annual exhibition of the Ceylon Institute of Builders held at BMICH with all leading stakeholders and key service providers of the building, housing, road construction etc.

The exhibition has helped the industry to reach the target audience in communicating and expanding of the scope of development successfully. This also helps with the market insights and to identify customer requirements better with long term benefits for increasing and evolving the product range.

Over the years, the exhibition has been a gathering place for consumers who are on the lookout for unique and modern products related to the construction industry. Products and Service providers in the industry have found the exhibition to be the most potential and comprehensive platform to meet new clients, networks, technologies and business meetings.

The construction industry is in a challenging time and we hope together we will overcome obstacles, blessed with new opportunities and build a vibrant and sustainable future for the Industry. CIOB appreciates your continued support and engagement over the years and hope you will join the Construction Expo 2025 and reap the benefits in the industry.

# "Green Building"

The green building represents one of the most significant and exciting opportunities for sustainable growth on both national and global scales. The design of our built environment impacts us all, as well as our economy and natural environment, and CIOB Green building initiatives are driving its transformation towards sustainability. The ideal green projects preserves and restores habitat that is vital for sustaining life and becomes a net producer and exporter of resources, materials, energy and water rather than being a net consumer. A green building is one whose construction and lifetime of operation assure the healthiest possible environment while representing the most efficient and least disruptive use of land, water, energy and resources. The optimum design solution is one that effectively emulates all of the natural systems and conditions of the pre-developed site- after development is complete.

CIOB Certification for Green Building Products

CIOB's Certification Scheme for Green Building products is a part of its overall mission to develop a truly sustainable and environmentally friendly built environment. The CIOB's certification scheme complements the Green Mark Scheme of the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) of Singapore. The assessment criteria are formulated by building professionals and experts. The multi-tiered certification scheme adopts an independent, multi-criteria third-party approach that complies with the ISO 14020 Type I international standard for environmental labeling.

## Exhibitor Profile

- Air conditioning
- Power Generation
- Doors, Windows & Locks
- Cleaning Equipment
- Floor Tiles & Wall Tiles
- Furniture and Fittings
- Lighting and Fittings
- Jacuzzi and Bath Tubes
- Roofing systems
- Pipes and Fittings
- Safety and Security Systems
- Material Handling Equipment
- Scaffolding Equipment and systems
- Steel based products
- Solar and Thermal Products
- Ventilation Systems
- Water Tanks and Draining Systems
- Telecommunication Equipment
- Engineering Projects & Services
- Building Materials
- Concrete Products, Landscaping
- Property Development
- Finance & Banking, IT Solutions
- Water Proofing Sealants
- Paint and Wall Finishes
- Electrical Switch Gear & Equipment
- Architectural & Engineering Consultancy
- Construction Chemicals
- Repair Materials
- House Builders

## Who will visit the exhibition

- Agents and Distributors
- Project Managers and Consultants
- Infrastructure Planners
- Property Managers, Quantity Surveyors
- Civil and Structural Engineers
- Government and Statutory Board Officials
- Developers & Manufacturers
- Contractors (Private & Government)
- Architects & Interior Designers
- Large Warehouse & Factory Builders
- Retailers, Trade Distributors
- Material and Equipment Specifiers
- Construction Equipment Handlers
- Home Builders
- Industry entrepreneurs
- Sustainable Solution Providers

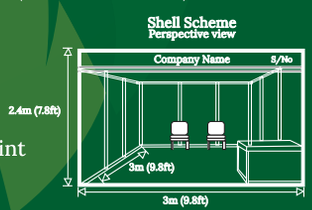
## Benefits of the Exhibition

CIOB, established in 1961 is the pioneering organization designed to evolving the construction industry in Sri Lanka. CIOB continued to enhance the industry through events such as World Construction Symposium for research and development based on new technology and other seminars & workshops for sustainable construction. By organizing Construction Expo throughout the years, CIOB further developed the industry through opportunities with strategic marketing, media advertising via electronic and print media, email and direct mailing campaigns. Attendees to Construction Expo are professionals in the institutional, industrial and commercial key personnel in the building environment who design, build, specify engineer, renovate, and operate in the construction sector. Architects, Engineers, Project Managers, Building owners and professionals in their teams will be part of this mega event. Investment opportunities and joint ventures are also promoted through Construction Expo by encouraging exhibitors from international arena in the region.

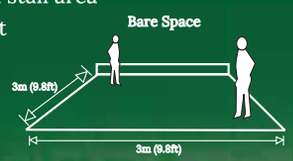
## Participation Options

Shell Scheme / Built up stall include the following:

- Basic stall structure (3m x 3m x 2.4 m)
- One fascia board
- One counter
- Two chairs
- Two spotlights
- One 5 amp plug point
- Cleaning




- **Bear space** include the following:
- 3m x 3m demarcated stall area
- One 5 amp plug point
- Cleaning




## Key objectives of CIOB are as follows

- Promoting Green Building Concept, a benchmarking scheme which incorporates internationally recognized best practices in environmental design and performance.
- Develop and disseminate the Science and Technology of modern Building Practices to assist all builders by means of seminars and workshops with inputs from specialist national and international resource Persons.
- Promote Competency and standard of Practices for the builders to reach professional Status.
- Act to improve conditions affecting the industry with a view to expanding the industry, which will include seeking opportunities for contracts overseas.
- Through its international affiliations will seek to use its influence to attract investments to the construction industry.
- Being the pivotal Organization for building profession it activity carrying out Training and Research for builders by establishing a library and Training and Research Centres called TRACS which is currently engaged in training of technicians up to NVQ level 5.
- Assisting to resolving disputes in the projects and companies by mediation practices under USAID/EEJ guidelines through the CIOB Mediation center
- CIOB works with the Government to provide appropriate solutions to the problems affecting the industry.

# IS CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE FADING AWAY?

Wafo Taghleb SMWafi Taghleb SM

In the rush for sleek modernism and cutting-edge minimalism, something profound is being left behind-the soul of architecture.

Have we lost the beauty of spaces that tell stories, invoke emotions, and connect us to history?

***Look around.***

How often do you enter a building that feels alive-with details that capture your gaze, ceilings that inspire awe, or spaces that invite you to stay?

The reality is, much of modern design feels sterile, focused more on function than feeling.

***Why This Matters***

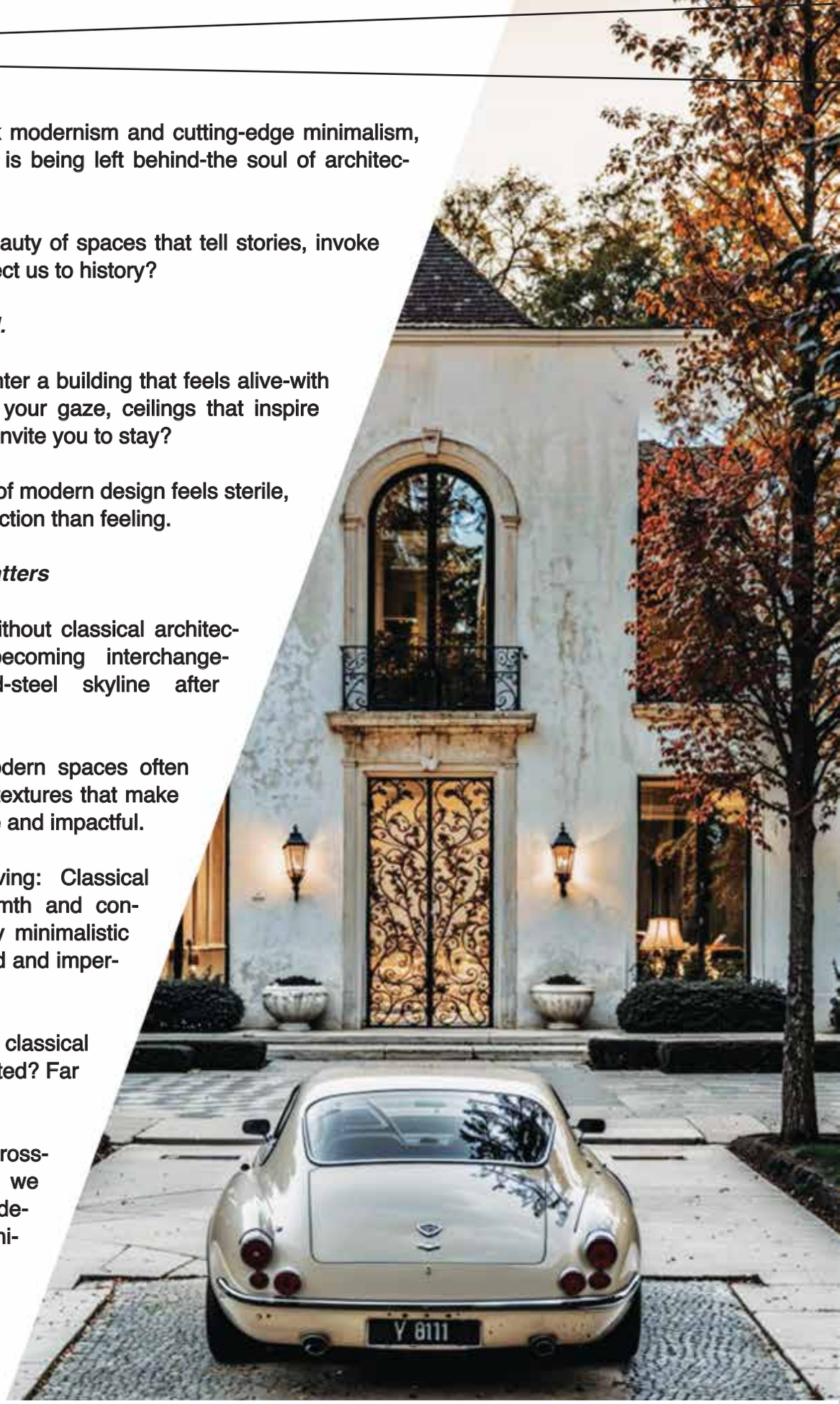
-Loss of Identity: Without classical architecture, cities risk becoming interchangeable-one glass-and-steel skyline after another.

-Lack of Depth: Modern spaces often lack the layers and textures that make buildings memorable and impactful.

- Disconnected Living: Classical designs evoke warmth and connection, while overly minimalistic designs can feel cold and impersonal.

But does that mean classical architecture is outdated? Far from it.

We're at a crossroads-and the path we choose now could redefine the future of architecture.




Can classical architecture make a comeback in the modern world? How can we innovate without losing our connection to history and heritage?

***Share your thoughts and together, we can reimagine a future where timeless elegance meets modern innovation.***

photos created by AI Midjourney

***Classical Design Can Evolve***

What if classical architecture isn't dying, but evolving?
What if we could marry the best of both worlds-classical elegance and modern innovation?
Imagine spaces that combine historical charm with cutting-edge technology, sustainability, and adaptability for today's lifestyles.

This vision isn't just a dream.
Architects and designers worldwide are already blending the balance and grandeur of classical elements with smart technologies and sustainable materials to create spaces that are not just functional but extraordinary.

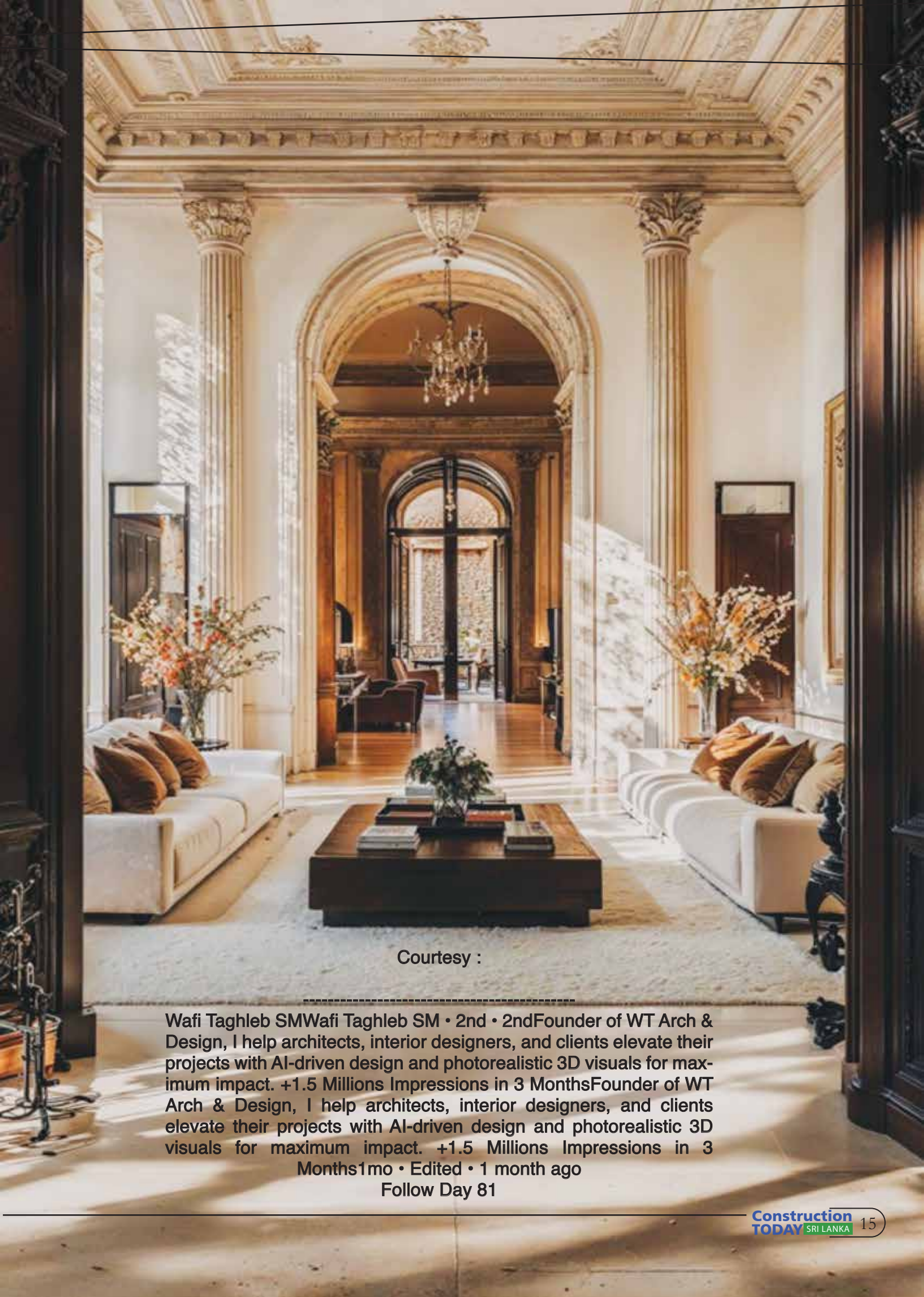
***The Solution: Bringing Classical Architecture into the Future.***

1.Embrace Hybrid Design:
Start with a classical foundation—arches, moldings, intricate textures—and layer in modern functionality like energy-efficient systems and open floor plans.

2. Prioritize Meaningful Details:
Use classical design elements sparingly but purposefully—statement ceilings, wrought-iron accents, or rich materials that evoke emotion.

3. Innovate with Sustainability:
Apply classical forms with green materials and smart technologies to future-proof designs without losing their soul.

4. Revive Craftsmanship:
Collaborate with artisans to reintroduce hand-crafted details into architecture, celebrating the beauty of imperfection and human touch.



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# SKILL DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR:

# A NEW FOCUS?

By - Shanika Gamage

The construction sector has long been a cornerstone of Sri Lanka's economy, driving infrastructure development, housing solutions, and job creation. However, the industry faces persistent challenges, including labour shortages, skills mismatches, and limited access to advanced training. As the new government unveils its policy agenda, there is growing anticipation about whether skill development and employment generation in the construction sector will receive renewed attention.

This article examines the current state of labour and skills in Sri Lanka's construction industry and explores potential initiatives that the government could introduce to address these pressing issues.

# THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF LABOUR & SKILLS IN CONSTRUCTION

## 1. LABOUR SHORTAGES

Sri Lanka's construction sector faces a significant shortage of skilled and semi-skilled labourers. A combination of factors contributes to this issue:

- ***Migration:*** *Many skilled workers seek opportunities abroad, where they are offered higher wages and better working conditions.*
- ***Aging Workforce:*** *A large segment of the construction workforce is nearing retirement age, with insufficient younger workers entering the field.*
- ***Perception Issues:*** *Construction is often perceived as a low-status, physically demanding profession, discouraging young people from pursuing it as a career.*

## 2. SKILLS GAP

The skills gap—a mismatch between the skills workers possess and the skills required by employers—is a critical challenge. The industry struggles with:

- *Limited expertise in modern construction techniques and technologies.*
- *A lack of specialization in areas such as sustainable building practices and advanced engineering.*
- *Insufficient soft skills, such as communication and teamwork, which are essential for project management and collaboration.*

## 3. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The labour shortages and skills gap have far-reaching implications for the construction sector and the broader economy:

- ***Delayed Projects:*** *Insufficient skilled labour causes delays in project timelines, increasing costs and reducing investor confidence.*
- ***Reduced Quality:*** *A lack of skilled workers compromises the quality and safety of construction projects.*
- ***Economic Stagnation:*** *Without an adequate workforce, the construction sector cannot achieve its full potential as a driver of economic growth.*

# THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN ADDRESSING LABOUR & SKILL CHALLENGES

The government's involvement is pivotal in addressing the labor and skill challenges in the construction sector. Through targeted policies, public-private partnerships, and investment in education and training, the government can create a robust workforce equipped to meet the industry's demands.

## 1. VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

Expanding and enhancing vocational training programs is a fundamental step. These programs should:

- *Offer hands-on training in modern construction techniques, tools, and materials.*
- *Incorporate certifications recognized by both local and international employers.*
- *Partner with private construction companies to align training curricula with industry needs.*

## 2. PROMOTING CAREERS IN CONSTRUCTION

Changing public perceptions about careers in construction is essential to attract younger generations. The government could:

- *Launch awareness campaigns highlighting the benefits of construction careers, such as job stability, competitive salaries, and opportunities for advancement.*
- *Collaborate with schools and universities to introduce construction-related subjects and career counselling.*
- *Offer scholarships and financial incentives for students pursuing construction-related studies.*

## 3. SUPPORTING TECHNOLOGICAL INTEGRATION

As technology transforms the construction industry, workers must be equipped with new skills. The government can:

- *Invest in technology-focused training programs covering areas such as Building Information Modelling (BIM), 3D printing, and drone technology.*
- *Provide subsidies for companies adopting advanced technologies to encourage their integration into daily operations.*
- *Facilitate partnerships between tech firms and construction companies to develop innovative solutions and training modules.*

## 4. ENCOURAGING RETURN MIGRATION

To address the loss of skilled workers to overseas markets, the government can implement strategies to attract return migration:

- *Offer tax incentives and resettlement assistance to workers returning from abroad.*
- *Create pathways for overseas workers to reintegrate into the local workforce through skills recognition and certification.*
- *Promote construction sector opportunities as lucrative and fulfilling for expatriate workers.*

## POTENTIAL POLICY INITIATIVES

As the government crafts its policy agenda, several initiatives could significantly impact skill development and employment in the construction sector:

### 1. NATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT FUND

Establishing a National Skill Development Fund could:

- *Finance training programs for workers across all skill levels.*
- *Provide grants to educational institutions and training centers to improve infrastructure and resources.*
- *Support research and development in construction technologies and training methodologies.*

### 2. PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPPs)

PPPs can play a crucial role in addressing labor and skill challenges. Through these collaborations:

- *Private companies can contribute to training program design and delivery, ensuring alignment with industry needs.*
- *The government can offer financial support and regulatory incentives to encourage private sector participation.*
- *Workers gain access to high-quality training, internships, and employment opportunities.*

### 3. INCENTIVES FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The government can incentivize skill development by:

- *Offering tax breaks to companies investing in employee training.*
- *Introducing wage subsidies for employers hiring trainees or apprentices.*
- *Providing cash rewards or recognition programs for workers acquiring new skills or certifications.*

### 4. REGIONAL TRAINING HUBS

Establishing regional training hubs can make skill development programs accessible to workers across the country. These hubs can:

- *Focus on region-specific construction needs, such as coastal infrastructure or urban development.*
- *Collaborate with local businesses to offer practical training and employment opportunities.*
- *Serve as centers for innovation and knowledge sharing within the construction industry.*

## THE IMPACT ON THE CONSTRUCTION ECOSYSTEM

Enhanced skill development and employment initiatives would have transformative effects on the construction ecosystem:

### 1. INCREASED WORKFORCE AVAILABILITY

Addressing labour shortages ensures that construction projects are completed on time and within budget, boosting investor confidence and economic activity.

### 2. IMPROVED PROJECT QUALITY

A skilled workforce enhances the quality, safety, and sustainability of construction projects, aligning with international standards and attracting foreign investment.

### 3. ECONOMIC GROWTH & JOB CREATION

Skill development initiatives generate employment opportunities across various sectors, from training institutions to construction sites, contributing to overall economic growth.

### 4. INNOVATION & COMPETITIVENESS

A technologically adept workforce fosters innovation, enabling Sri Lanka's construction industry to compete on a global scale.

## CHALLENGES & CONSIDERATIONS

While the benefits are clear, implementing skill development and employment initiatives comes with challenges:

- ***Funding Constraints:*** *Adequate financing is essential to establish and sustain training programs and infrastructure.*
- ***Stakeholder Collaboration:*** *Effective partnerships between the government, private sector, and educational institutions require coordination and mutual trust.*
- ***Monitoring and Evaluation:*** *Regular assessment of training programs' effectiveness is necessary to ensure they meet industry needs and deliver measurable outcomes.*
- ***Inclusivity:*** *Ensuring that training programs are accessible to underrepresented groups, such as women and rural workers, is critical for equitable development.*

## CONCLUSION

The construction sector stands at a crossroads, with labour shortages and skills gaps threatening its potential. As Sri Lanka's new government takes office, prioritizing skill development and employment in construction could herald a new era of growth and innovation. By introducing targeted policies, fostering partnerships and investing in education and training, the government can create a dynamic, skilled workforce ready to meet the industry's demands.

Through these efforts, the construction sector can not only address its immediate challenges but also lay the foundation for long-term resilience and success. The question is no longer whether Sri Lanka can achieve this transformation but how quickly and effectively it can seize the opportunity to build a brighter future.

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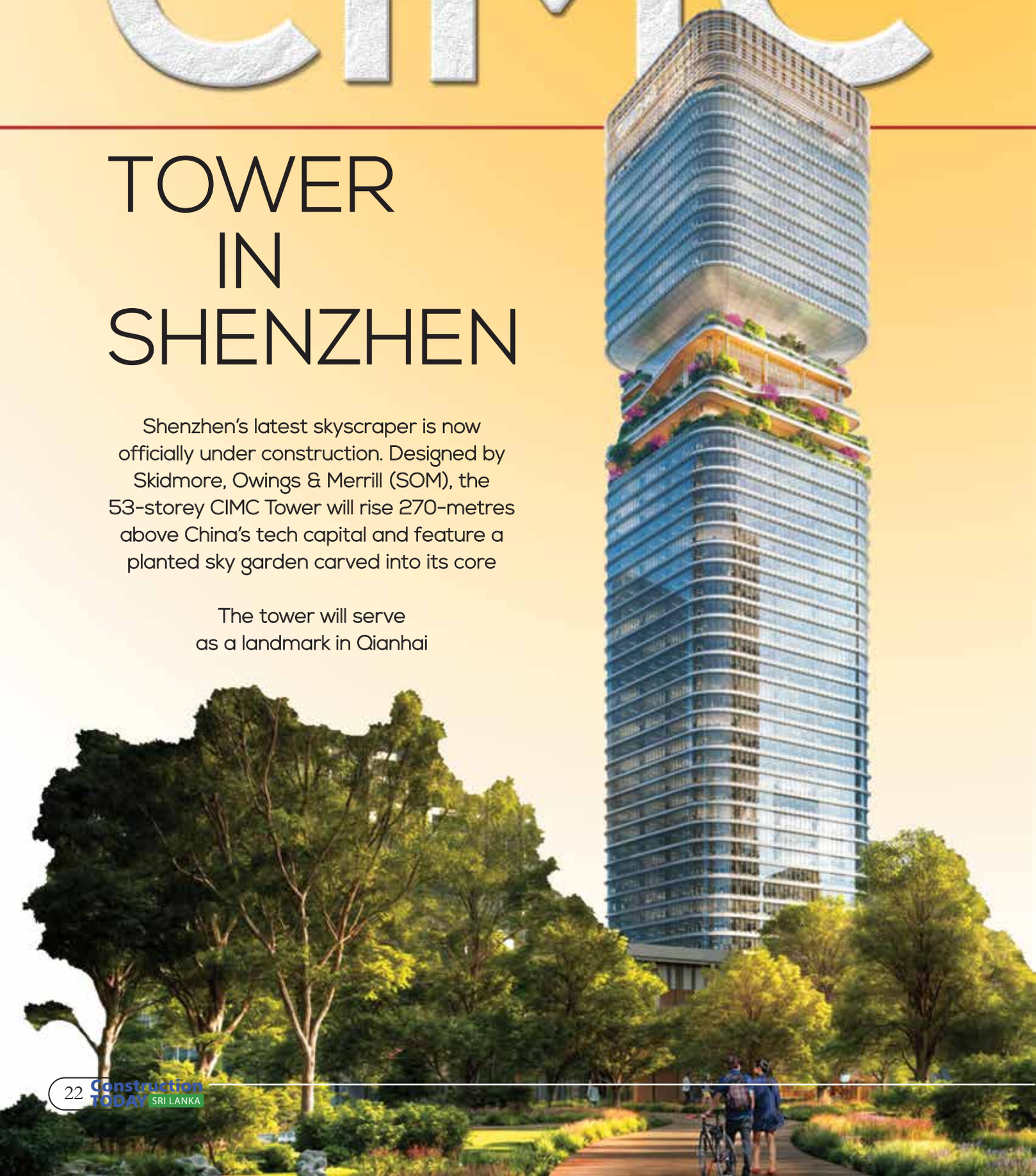
# CIMC

# TOWER IN SHENZHEN

Shenzhen's latest skyscraper is now officially under construction. Designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), the 53-storey CIMC Tower will rise 270-metres above China's tech capital and feature a planted sky garden carved into its core

The tower will serve as a landmark in Qianhai



# CIMC TOWER OF GARDEN WORKSPACES BREAKS GROUND

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), in collaboration with China International Marine Containers Group (CIMC), has officially begun construction on the CIMC Global Headquarters in Shenzhen's Qianhai district. The 53-story, 270-meter-tall skyscraper is poised to become a new landmark in the region. The design was awarded to SOM after winning an international competition, with plans to set new standards for sustainability and innovation in the continually growing city.

As a leader in the transportation and energy equipment industries, CIMC's new headquarters reflects its industry stature and commitment to sustainability. The SOM design merges high-performance corporate functions with Shenzhen's natural landscape, resulting in a vertical mixed-use development. The building will be programmed with office space, retail outlets, and conference facilities, introducing new workspaces for more than 60,000 employees.

**three nature-infused amenity zones include a sky lobby, rooftop garden, and tiered podium**

## SOM LOOKS TO MOUNTAINS OUTSIDE SHENZHEN

With the design of Shenzhen's upcoming CIMC tower, the architects at global studio SOM took inspiration by the mountainous landscapes depicted in traditional Chinese scroll paintings. With this influence, the team incorporates three nature-focused amenity zones. At the core of the tower, a central sky lobby will serve as a green gathering area, bringing a touch of nature into the urban space. The building will feature a rooftop garden offering panoramic views of Qianhai Bay, and a tiered podium at the base, blending nature with the surrounding urban environment. Outdoor terraces, walking paths, and lush green spaces are key elements in fostering a healthy, dynamic workspace.

The building's base is designed as a staggered podium, housing an expansive office lobby and a sunlit atrium. These areas connect to street-level retail and dining spaces, creating a welcoming environment for both employees and visitors. A sunken plaza links the development to Shenzhen's subway system, facilitating easy access to public transit. From the street level, visitors can take landscaped walkways to the second-floor bridge level, which offers elevated views of the cityscape.

## SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND INNOVATION

In line with CIMC's commitment to sustainability and high-quality development in Shenzhen, the design by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) integrates cutting-edge manufacturing technology and environmental strategies. The tower will incorporate energy-efficient systems, such as intelligent daylight sensing, photovoltaic panels, and optimized materials. These efforts aim to meet the highest environmental standards, including Three-Star Green Building, LEED, and WELL Platinum certifications. **With the groundbreaking now complete, the CIMC Global Headquarters is on track for a 2029 completion.**

sustainable features include intelligent daylight sensing, photovoltaic panels, and energy-efficient materials

## PROJECT INFO

**project title:** CIMC Global Headquarters
**architecture:** Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) | @skidmoreowingsmerrill
**location:** Shenzhen, China
**completion: expected 2029**
**visualizations:** © Atchain | @atchain

# BY GUEST WRITER

## *PROF. ANANDA JAYAWARDANE*

Senior Professor in Civil Engineering,
former Vice-Chancellor,
University of Moratuwa and
former Chairman,
Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC

*The construction industry which was a major contributor to the economic land scape of Sri Lanka received a double blow due to the COVID pandemic and the economic crisis that followed.*

*However today the industry is making a strong come back and the construction industry is projected to experience significant growth in 2025, with an anticipated expansion of around 6%.*

*"This positive outlook is driven by substantial public and private investments across various sectors, including industrial, infrastructure, and energy projects," says Prof. Ananda Jayawardane,*

Senior Professor in Civil Engineering, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Moratuwa and former Chairman, Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC.

After being in bad state the industry showed signs of recovery in 2024 expanding by 7.3% in real terms, attributed to increased gross fixed capital formation and investments in infrastructure and energy projects.

The first half of 2024 saw a 16% year-on-year growth in gross fixed capital formation, rising from Rs1.3 trillion in 2023 to Rs1.5 trillion.

This resurgence is partly due to the resumption of multilateral-funded projects and a decline in construction material costs, including significant reductions in cement and steel prices by about 30-40%.

"A notable focus is on renewable energy initiatives, as the government aims to generate 70% of the country's electricity from renewable sources by 2030. This ambitious plan includes significant capacity enhancement of solar power, wind power, and establishing substantial Battery Energy Storage Systems and Pumped Storage Plants."

The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for the construction sector expanded to 52.9 in January 2025, indicating growth in construction activities. There is an expectation of a gradual rise in government-funded infrastructure projects, which is anticipated to sustain the industry's momentum in the coming months.

Despite these positive trends, challenges persist. The apartment segment continues to struggle, influenced by increased VAT rates deterring potential investors.

Additionally, the industry faces a labor shortage due to a significant workforce migration during the crisis years, with an estimated over 350,000 workers leaving the sector.

## *FOLLOWING IS AN IN DEPTH Q&A WITH PROF. ANANDA JAYAWARDANE ON VARIOUS ISSUES RELATED TO THE INDUSTRY.*

**How do you review the construction sector during the pre C-19, Economic crisis era?**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic crisis, Sri Lanka's construction sector was a significant contributor to the national economy, accounting for approximately 7.6% of the GDP. The industry at that time experienced steady growth, driven by both public infrastructure projects and private investments.

The onset of the pandemic in 2020, coupled with economic challenges, led to a severe contraction in the construction sector.

Factors such as foreign currency shortages, escalating interest rates, non-payment to contractors and the suspension of government-funded infrastructure projects due to fiscal constraints contributed to this downturn. It is reported that the sector faced a significant decline of 21.8% in output in 2023.

## Q: WHAT WERE THE NEW GROWTH AREAS?

**A:** Sri Lanka's construction industry has experienced growth across several key sectors, driven by economic development, urbanization, and strategic investments. There had been significant Development in transportation and utility infrastructure, including expressways, upgradation of railway tracks. The commercial sector has seen expansion, particularly in tourism-related projects.

The Urban Development Authority (UDA) announced plans in January 2024 to complete 22 mixed-use, residential, IT, and tourism projects within the year, aiming to boost tourism and attract foreign direct investment. There is also a strong emphasis on renewable energy projects mainly solar and wind energy projects in the northern province, aiming to reduce power costs and address energy shortages.

These sectors collectively contribute to the industry's projected average annual growth rate of around 6% between 2025 and 2028.

These growth areas invariably enhance the capacity, competence and competitiveness of local contractors and consultants enabling them to be globally competitive to secure overseas projects.

## Q: WHAT ASSISTANCE DO YOU EXPECT FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND BANKING SECTOR FOR THE REVIVAL OF THE INDUSTRY?

**A:** Revitalizing and growth of Sri Lanka's construction industry necessitates coordinated efforts from both the government and the banking sector. Recommendations derived from comprehensive stakeholder consultation have already been submitted to the government and the relevant authorities by the Ceylon Institute of Builders (CIOB) and the Chamber of the Construction Industry Sri Lanka.

According to recent reports, the CIOB is urging the government to implement measures like establishing a dedicated development bank for the construction industry, providing low-interest loan schemes with repayment grace periods for contractors, and revising outdated contractual pricing models to better reflect current economic realities, all aimed at revitalizing the construction sector in the country.

In this process, clearly the government has a key and a strategic role to play by instituting consistent policy, transparent procurement process, facilitation measures, development initiatives, maintaining standards, regulatory aspects, tax incentives and providing solutions to pressing needs of the stakeholders of the construction industry. This needs effective implementation of already existing instruments and implementing new measures to improve the entire construction industry eco-system so that our players not only locally but also globally become competitive.

Banking sector too should consider that their role in the industry is intermediator facilitating economic players to carry out their businesses. Such facilitation should include appropriate measures by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka to assist sectors adversely affected by economic challenges, enabling licensed commercial banks to extend loan facilities to the construction industry alleviating cash flow constraints faced by construction firms.

By implementing these strategies, the government and banking sector can collaboratively facilitate the resurgence of Sri Lanka's construction industry, contributing to broader economic recovery and development.

## Q: WHAT IS YOUR SUGGESTION FOR THE COMPLETION OF PARTLY BUILT OR ABANDONED REAL ESTATE PROJECTS?

**A:** Reviving partially built or abandoned real estate projects in Sri Lanka requires a multifaceted approach involving financial support, policy reforms, and strategic partnerships. The investors of these projects faced a multitude of issues due to Easter Bombing, Covid pandemic, economic meltdown resulting financial, liquidity, demand and import restriction issues.

However, with the government securing a $3 billion bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), successful debt restructuring, political stability and positive good governance environment is

expected to send positive signals to lending agencies and investors, potentially facilitating the resumption of stalled projects.

Further strategies such as (a) ease of taxes on building materials aiming to reduce construction costs and encourage the completion of halted projects, (b) engaging in PPPs to attract private investment and expertise, distributing risks and benefits between public entities and private developers, (c) offering incentives such as tax breaks, streamlined approval processes, and guarantees, (d) Provision of tailored loan products with favorable terms by banks to developers committed to completing stalled projects, (e) reducing bureaucratic hurdles and expediting approvals (f) involving local communities and stakeholders in decision-making fostering a sense of ownership and ensuring that projects align with local needs and expectations can accelerate project completion, making investments more attractive and feasible.

## Q: WHAT ARE SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE HIGH CONSTRUCTIONS COSTS IN SRI LANKA?

**A:** Sri Lanka has one of the highest construction costs in the region however by integrating modern strategies, constructors in Sri Lanka can effectively manage and reduce construction costs, leading to more sustainable and profitable projects.

Reducing construction costs in Sri Lanka requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses modern management practices, innovative construction techniques, and sustainable resource utilization.

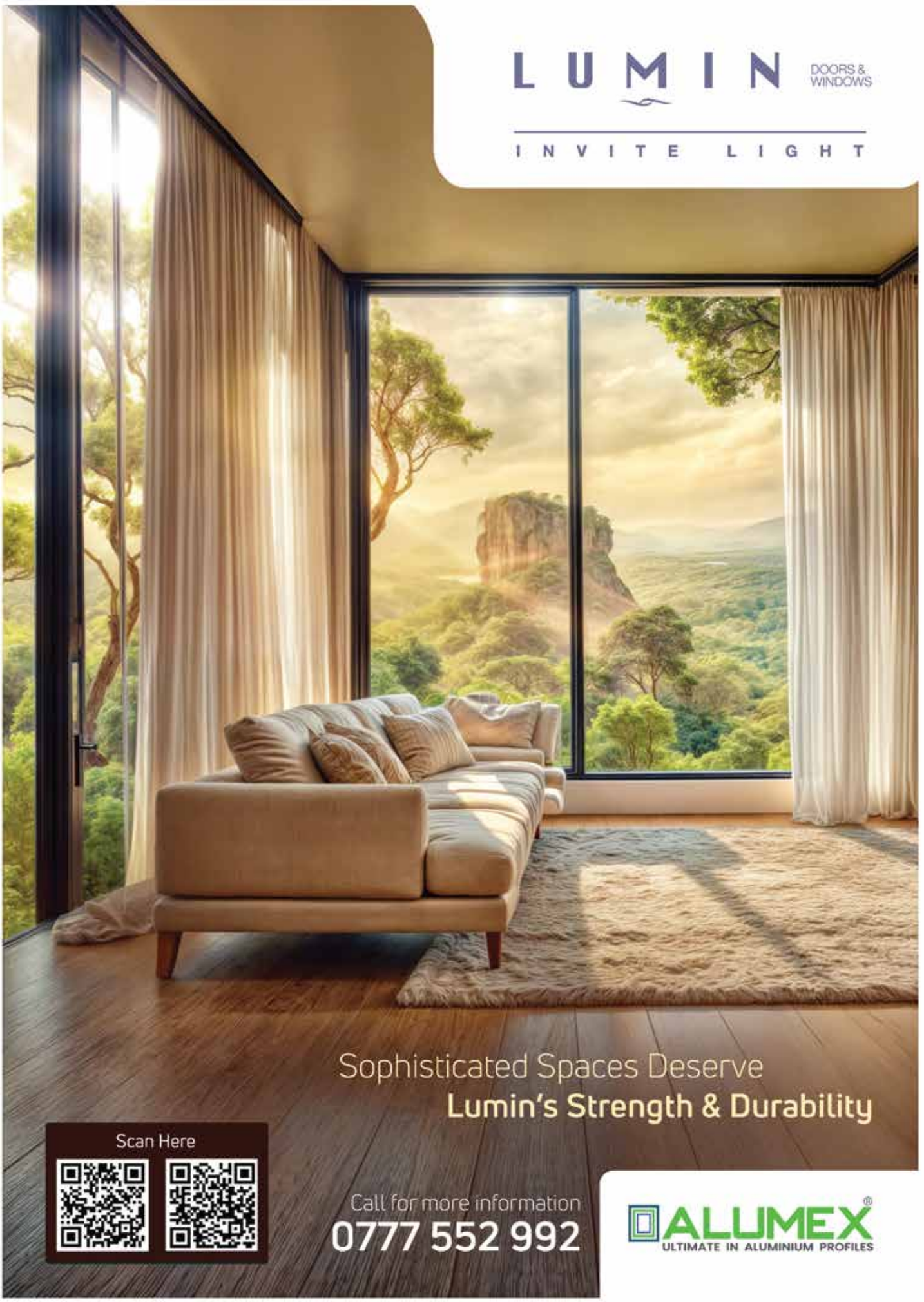
The fundamental to this is effective and efficient project management. Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), a publication by the Project Management Institute of the US provides collection of knowledge based on global best practices for project management from inception to closing a project.

Even before construction, constructors have a crucial role in reduction of cost by developing a detailed project plan which includes preparation of a detailed and optimum project schedule, utilizing the most suitable resource combinations, and using the most appropriate equipment and methodologies. Construction projects usually follows a predictive approach with relatively clear project scope and hence a relatively accurate project plan can be developed.

During construction, constructors need to execute his/her plan, track progress, carry out control measures, revise the plan according to the latest project information until the contractual closer of the project.

**In a succinct form the following processes and strategies can be used to reduce cost during construction.**

- Proactively plan to secure the planned resources in time according to the contractor's resource schedule so that there are no delays in providing any required material, human or equipment resource for tasks.
- Constantly monitor the risk management plan to ensure that any risks identified are appropriately mitigated and any assumptions made have any deviations. If so take prompt action to address those risks.
- Ensure that the project scope is effectively managed establishing clear protocols for change requests and approvals so that unplanned and unexpected scope changes are avoided ensuring smooth execution of project activities.
- Implementing effective inventory control systems to ensure that materials are available when needed, minimizing storage costs and material wastage.
- Reduce and reuse construction waste through proper waste management approaches.
- Effectively utilize human and equipment resources so that their idle times are minimized.
- Regularly track project physical and financial progress and take timely action to take any corrective measures.
- Secure required working capital through appropriate cash flow management, securing bank facilities if needed, submitting interim payment certificates and any other claims.
- Managing project quality and meeting compliance requirements avoiding any penalties, rework and waste of resources.
- Ensure safety of workforce to avoid any injuries to workmen and damages to work meeting safety standards.
- Implement project activities in a harmonious and professional manner working as a team to have smooth project execution avoiding any conflicts and disputes.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## FOLLOWING IS AN IN DEPTH Q&A WITH PROF. ANANDA JAYAWARDANE ON VARIOUS ISSUES RELATED TO THE INDUSTRY.

### Q: WHAT ARE THE NEW SUGGESTIONS FOR COST EFFECTIVE AND ENERGY SAVING/GREEN TECHNIQUES THAT SHOULD BE ADOPTED?

**A:** Implementing cost-effective and energy-efficient techniques in Sri Lanka's construction industry is pivotal for promoting sustainability and reducing operational expenses and also align with the sustainable development goals.

I believe that we need to start with the building design itself. Incorporating passive design strategies, such as optimizing natural ventilation, daylighting, and thermal mass, can significantly decrease reliance on artificial heating and cooling systems. For example, aligning with the Green Building Council of Sri Lanka's certification programs will ensure that constructions meet established environmental standards, promoting resource efficiency and sustainability.

These initiatives include (a) implementing energy-efficient lighting solutions, including LED fixtures and smart controls, thereby reduce electricity consumption, (b) incorporating recycled materials and renewable resources, such as bamboo, can lessen environmental impact and promote sustainability, (c) employing prefabricated components to streamline the construction process, leading to reduced labor costs and material waste (d) utilizing materials readily available within the region to reduce transportation emissions and support the local economy (e) installing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems with high energy efficiency ratings leading to substantial energy savings, (f) leveraging Sri Lanka's abundant sunlight by installing solar panels to provide a sustainable and cost-effective energy source for buildings (g) implementing systems to collect and utilize rainwater to reduce dependence on municipal water supplies, (h) selecting appliances that meet energy efficiency standards contributing to reduced energy consumption and operational costs.

By adopting these strategies, stakeholders in our construction industry can enhance sustainability, reduce costs, and contribute to environmental Preservation.

**Is the short supply of sand still an issue?**

Yes, the short supply of sand continues to be a significant issue in Sri Lanka's construction industry. The demand for sand has escalated due to extensive construction projects, leading to environmental concerns and regulatory measures that have further constrained supply.

Excessive river sand mining has led to severe ecological consequences, including riverbank erosion and habitat destruction. Notably, in some Sri Lankan rivers, over-extraction has reversed water flow, causing saltwater intrusion and enabling saltwater crocodiles to migrate inland, posing risks to communities.

To mitigate these environmental impacts, the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau (GSMB) has imposed strict regulations on sand mining. These include limiting extraction volumes and enforcing transportation schedules, which, while environmentally beneficial, have reduced the availability of sand for construction purposes.

To address the shortage, initiatives have been undertaken to harvest offshore sand. The Sri Lanka Land Reclamation & Development Corporation (SLLRDC) has commenced marketing offshore sand as a viable alternative for construction, following suitability assessments by the University of Moratuwa and the National Buildings Research Organization. Alternatively, companies have established plants to produce manufactured sand, aiming to meet the rising demand and reduce dependence on river-sourced sand.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist due to the high demand and limited supply of alternatives. Continuous investment in sustainable practices and exploration of new sources are imperative to alleviate the sand shortage in Sri Lanka's construction sector.

## Q: DO YOU RECOMMEND TREATED SEA SAND FOR CONSTRUCTION?

**A:** Yes, utilizing treated sea sand is a viable alternative to river sand, provided it undergoes proper treatment to remove impurities, particularly chlorides. Studies have demonstrated that appropriately processed sea sand can serve as an effective fine aggregate in concrete production. For instance, research indicates that treated sea sand can enhance both the mechanical and durability properties of concrete, offering better resistance against adverse environmental conditions.

The SLLRDC has been proactive in promoting the use of offshore sea sand for construction. They have invested in infrastructure, such as trailing suction hopper dredgers, to dredge and process sea sand, ensuring its suitability for the construction industry.

However, it's crucial to ensure that the sea sand is adequately treated to reduce chloride content to acceptable levels, as excessive chlorides can lead to corrosion of steel reinforcement in concrete structures. Techniques such as wet processing, including washing and classification, can effectively reduce chloride levels, making the sand suitable for concrete and plastering applications.

## Q: WHAT ARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR LABOR SHORTAGE? DO YOU RECOMMEND IMPORTING LABOR?

**A:** Clearly, labor shortage occurs when there is a significant expansion of construction activities and severe migration of construction labor to other sectors and for overseas employment. Usually both don't happen at the same time.

However, already many have left the industry due to significant contraction of the sector during troubled years. There is also a seasonal employment pattern of our labor force especially at skilled, semi-skilled and primary levels. Addressing the labor shortage therefore requires a multifaceted approach that balances immediate needs with sustainable, long-term solutions.

I can make a couple of recommendations to address labor shortage.

First, we must have a mechanism to forecast the demand. Despite significant research in this area, this was a challenge in the past due to unpredictable variables. I believe that we are now in a better position to do this. Construction Industry Development Authority (CIDA) is the best institute to do this on a sustainable and a reliable basis.

Second, we must enhance Vocational Training and Education, investing in comprehensive training programs to equip the local workforce with necessary skills. However, this needs a holistic approach addressing inherent issues in this sector. Collaborations between the government, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders can develop curricula that align with current industry demands and adopting strategies to overcome the challenges.

Third, there is a need to improve working conditions and compensation. Enhancing wages, benefits, and workplace safety can make construction jobs more attractive to local workers. Addressing factors such as low salary scales, social prestige, and safety standards is crucial.

Fourth, we need to adopt technological advancements learning from global best practices adapting to suit local conditions. Incorporating prefabrication and off-site manufacturing can reduce reliance on manual labor. These methods not only mitigate labor shortages but also enhance productivity, efficiency and quality in construction projects.

I firmly believe that Sri Lanka's long term solution should be skilling our own labor force to meet the needs of the construction industry through enhanced training, retraining, upskilling and attracting potential labor.

However, occasional or temporary importation of skilled foreign labor may be required for larger donor funded or FDI projects as a contractual requirement or to fill a short-term need. Such opportunities will also help technology transfer, learning best practices and in turn significant enhancement of labor productivity of Sri Lanka workers.

This approach should be carefully managed to prevent potential issues such as unauthorized employment and to ensure that it complements rather than hinders local workforce development.

## Q: DO YOU SEE A DECLINE IN BUILDING MATERIAL PRODUCTS IMPORTED OR LOCALLY MADE?

**A:** In recent years, Sri Lanka's construction industry faced fluctuations in the availability and importation of building materials for the aforementioned reasons. In 2022, the sector encountered significant challenges, including a 35% decline in cement availability compared to the previous year, primarily due to rising raw material costs and fuel shortages.

However, data from March 2024 indicates a positive shift, with a broad-based increase in expenditure on investment goods, notably higher imports of building materials and machinery. This uptick suggests a recovery in the sector, supported by increased importation of essential construction materials.

Despite these improvements, the industry continues to navigate challenges related to material costs and supply chain stability. Ongoing efforts to enhance local production capacities and secure diversified import sources are crucial to sustain the growth trajectory of Sri Lanka's construction sector.

# DUBAI
## DAMAC PROPERTIES


Damac Properties achieved a record-breaking sales milestone, selling over Dh10 billion worth of properties in less than 10 hours, ending 2024 on a high note.

The developer sold 3,100 units of its newly launched Damac Islands project in Dubailand, which features six clusters inspired by tropical destinations.

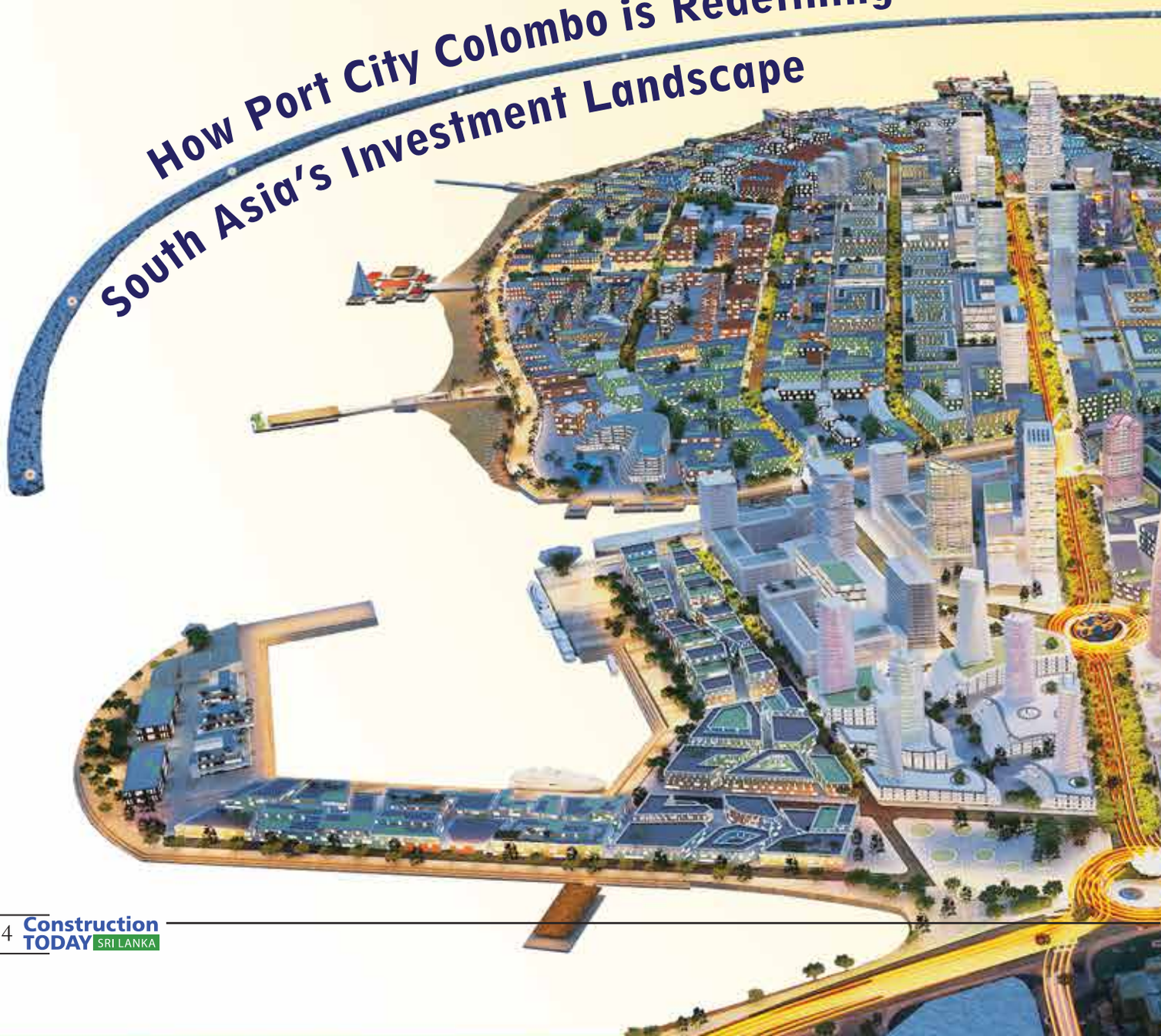
This remarkable sales success reflects strong market confidence in Dubai's real estate sector, attracting high-net-worth individuals and end-users.

With the market still more affordable than global peers like London and New York, Dubai's real estate outlook for 2025 remains positive, driven by ongoing infrastructure development and a focus on sustainability.

Courtesy : Start up Dubai/LinkedIn

# BRINGING DUBAI'S FDI MODEL TO SRI LANKA

## How Port City Colombo is Redefining South Asia's Investment Landscape

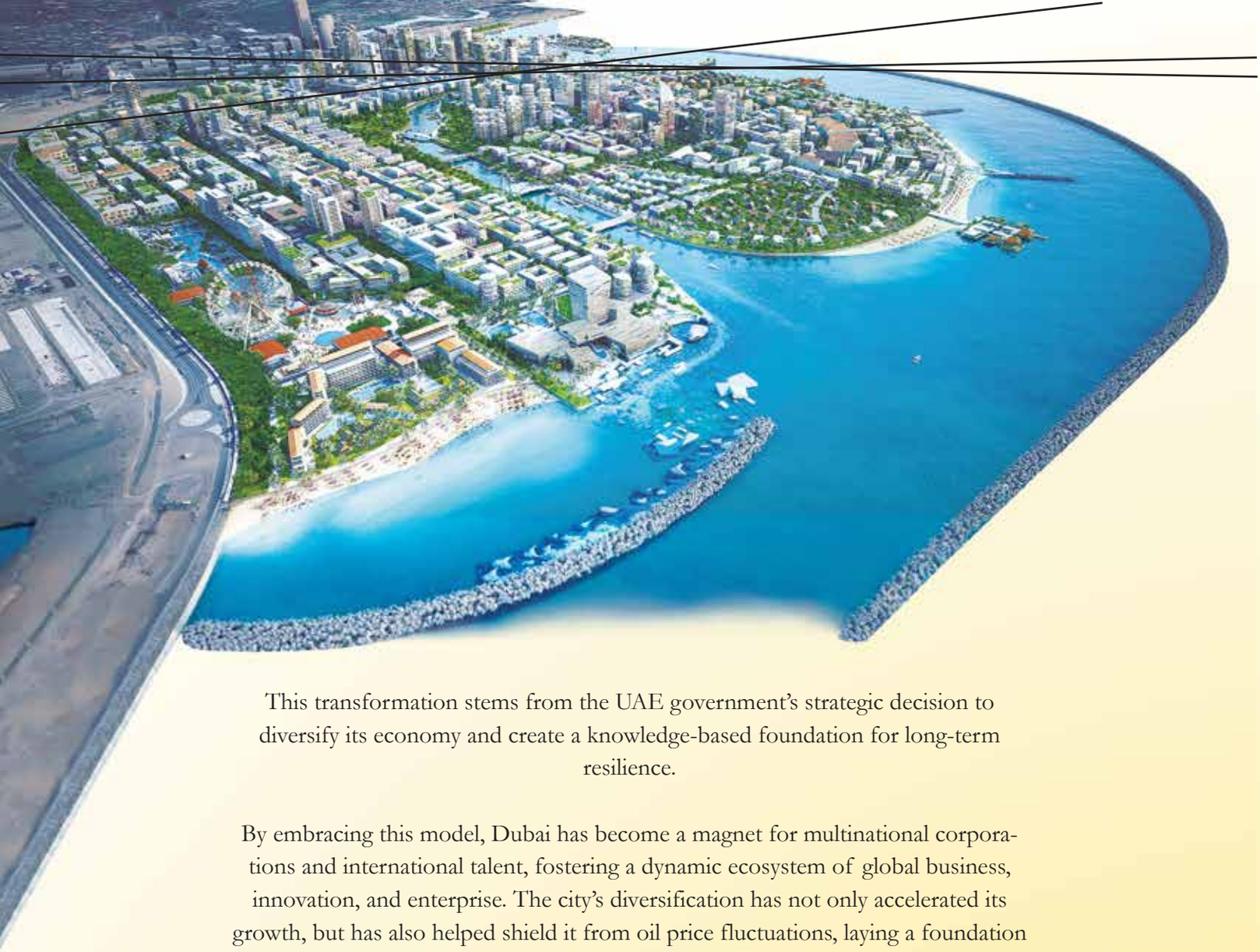


Port City Colombo is South Asia's most ambitious master-planned city development, designed to emerge as a leading offshore business and financial hub that competes with established centres like Dubai. This transformative project represents a progressive new chapter in Sri Lanka for foreign direct investment (FDI), offering unparalleled opportunities.

As global investors seek streamlined regulatory frameworks, economic freedom, and promising returns, Port City Colombo emerges as an ideal choice. Leveraging a globally competitive regulatory ecosystem, this visionary project is built on a model similar to Dubai's, which transformed a once oil-dependent economy into a diversified, sustainable global hub.

## *DUBAI'S MODEL – A BLUEPRINT FOR DIVERSIFICATION & ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION*

Dubai's economic journey stands as a model for aspiring cities worldwide. Having evolved from a dependency on oil exports, Dubai is now home to a large and diversified economy driven by sectors such as tourism, hospitality, logistics, aviation, and financial services.



This transformation stems from the UAE government's strategic decision to diversify its economy and create a knowledge-based foundation for long-term resilience.

By embracing this model, Dubai has become a magnet for multinational corporations and international talent, fostering a dynamic ecosystem of global business, innovation, and enterprise. The city's diversification has not only accelerated its growth, but has also helped shield it from oil price fluctuations, laying a foundation for sustainable expansion.

However, recent developments, such as the introduction of corporate tax rates up to 9%, signal an evolution in Dubai's economic landscape. As Dubai matures, investors are increasingly turning their attention to emerging hubs like Port City Colombo, which offer competitive investment advantages.

## *PORT CITY COLOMBO – THE GATEWAY TO SOUTH ASIA*

Port City Colombo is establishing itself as South Asia's leading investment destination, leveraging Dubai's diversified model to cultivate a highly attractive pro-investment environment. With unique advantages tailored to a wide range of investors – from real estate developers and technology companies to trade and commerce, and financial services – Port City Colombo is unlocking significant investment potential for the region.

Designated as a multi-service special economic zone in Sri Lanka, Port City Colombo is governed by a modern regulatory framework that fosters a stable, investor-friendly atmosphere. Strategically situated in the Indian Ocean, Port City Colombo's geographical location places it at the crossroads of global shipping, airline, and trade routes, giving investors seamless access to the vibrant South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Middle Eastern markets.

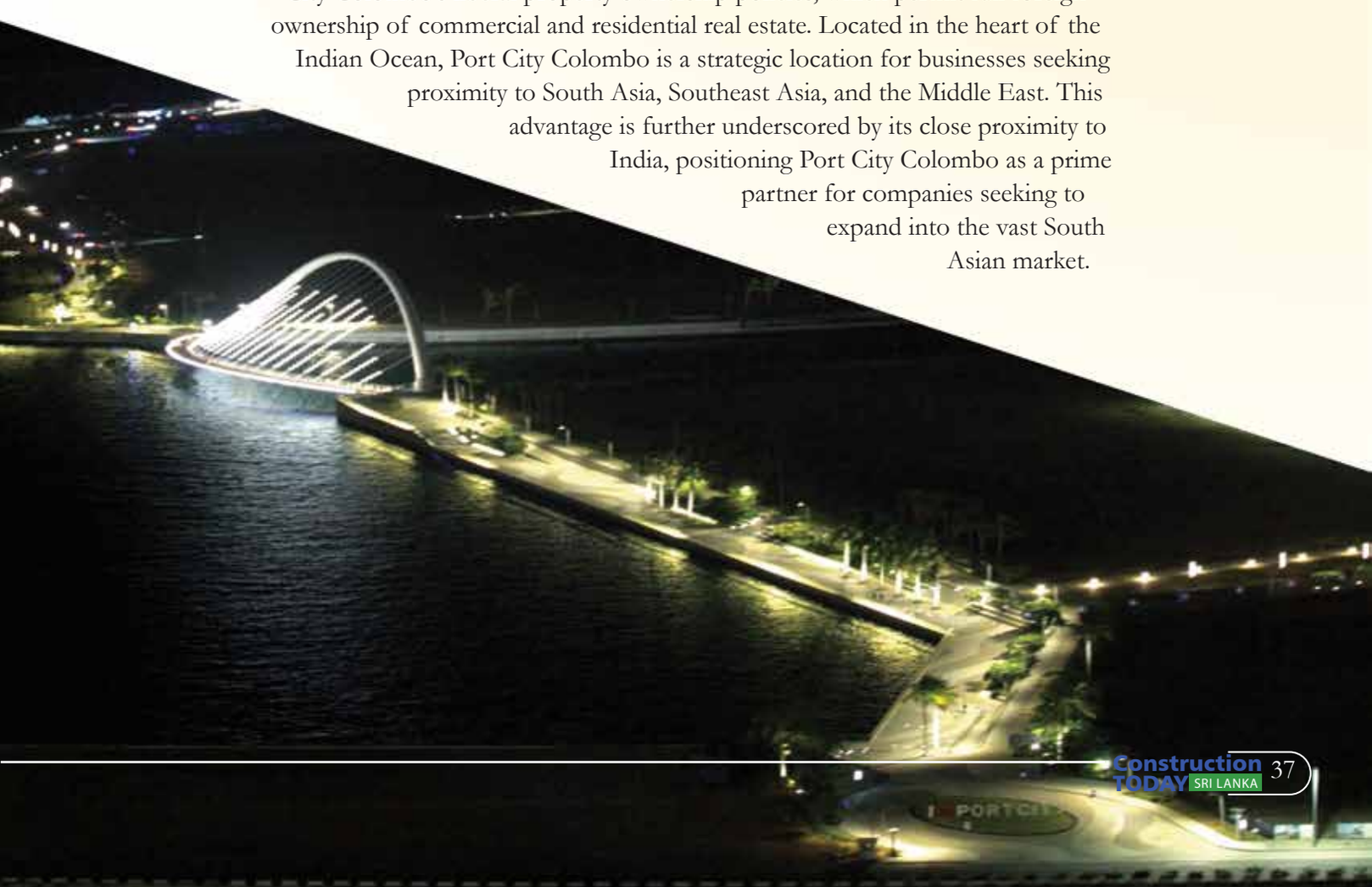
Port City Colombo offers comprehensive fiscal incentives, including tax exemptions for 25 plus years, 100% foreign ownership of capital assets, and unrestricted movement of capital. Investors can also conduct business and retain earnings in any of 16 major foreign currencies, an advantage in today's fluctuating economic environment. Together, these incentives create an unparalleled investment landscape that rivals established hubs like Dubai.

With a focus on fostering an integrated business ecosystem, Port City Colombo supports a broad range of sectors, including real estate, financial services, IT/BPM (Business Process Management), and Global Capability Centres (GCCs). These sectors stand to benefit significantly from Port City Colombo's regulatory framework, which actively promotes foreign ownership, innovation, and growth.

## *REAL ESTATE & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT*

The commercial real estate sector is one of the key pillars of the Port City Colombo project. Offering premier commercial and mixed-use developments, Port City Colombo is becoming the preferred regional base for multinational corporations and financial institutions. Real estate investment opportunities extend to developers interested in creating luxury retail spaces, hotels, and hospitality venues, further positioning Port City Colombo as South Asia's leading destination for business and leisure.

The Sri Lankan government's support for foreign investment is reflected in Port City Colombo's liberal property ownership policies, which permit full foreign ownership of commercial and residential real estate. Located in the heart of the Indian Ocean, Port City Colombo is a strategic location for businesses seeking proximity to South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. This advantage is further underscored by its close proximity to India, positioning Port City Colombo as a prime partner for companies seeking to expand into the vast South Asian market.



## *FUTURE-READY – A FOCUS ON KNOWLEDGE & INNOVATION*

Port City Colombo is dedicated to establishing a knowledge-based, innovation-driven economy. By creating a supportive environment, it aims to attract sectors such as technology, BPM, and financial services, positioning itself as a key innovation hub for South Asia. With a conducive ecosystem that fosters technological advancement and skills development, Port City Colombo is drawing multinational corporations, talented professionals, and skilled workers who seek an environment that encourages innovation and creativity.

Through its knowledge-centric approach, Port City Colombo is set to become an ideal location for regional headquarters serving the expanding South Asian and ASEAN markets, appealing to businesses, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs.

## *A SUSTAINABLE MODEL FOR LONG-TERM GROWTH*

Beyond economic aspirations, Port City Colombo is built with a strong commitment to sustainability. Integrating ecofriendly practices and green infrastructure from the outset, it is prioritising environmental responsibility to attract companies committed to sustainable growth. Port City Colombo's approach to sustainability is comprehensive, encompassing urban planning, environmental responsibility, and green building standards.

This focus on sustainable urban development aligns with global investors' increasing demand for environmentally conscious developments, positioning Port City

Colombo as a leader in green urban planning in South Asia. Through placing an emphasis on sustainability, Port City Colombo is ready to meet today's demands and adapt to future challenges.

## *PORT CITY COLOMBO – YOUR NEXT INVESTMENT DESTINATION IN SOUTH ASIA*

In adopting an economic model inspired by Dubai and other global hubs, Port City Colombo is establishing itself as a gateway for global investment in Sri Lanka and South Asia. Its competitive fiscal incentives, flexible ownership policies, and progressive regulatory framework create an investment proposition unparalleled in the region.

As businesses seek to expand in an interconnected global economy, Port City Colombo's investor-friendly environment provides an attractive alternative to traditional hubs such as Dubai and Singapore. With a focus on economic diversification, financial freedom, and sustainable growth, Port City Colombo is poised to attract multinational corporations, real estate developers, financial institutions, and knowledge-based industries.

Port City Colombo embodies the nation's aspirations of becoming a global investment powerhouse, inviting the world to join in this era of opportunity and growth for South Asia.

# CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY & SRI LANKA BUDGET 2025

## ANOTHER DIFFICULT YEAR FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY


**Dr. Rohan Karunaratne -** President, Ceylon Institute of Builders

Since 2019 the Construction Industry has declined amidst the Easter Attacks, Covid and Economic crises. The industry's growth rate which once 21% has fallen to 6%. Around half of contractors have exited the industry while the remaining half struggle every day to survive.

However, by submitting the Construction Industry's Budget proposal to the government, CIOB hoped that 2025 would be a turning point for the industry. However, the news that only half of our requests have been met in the 2025 budget, brought us to conclusion that 2025 will be another dark year for construction.

The Construction Industry once held a market size of 10B USD. Usually government contracts contribute about 3-4B USD. However this year we have, more or less, 1.3B USD of government projects.

This leaves contractors to fight over these which leads them to competitively bid for unrealistic prices, simply for their survival. This however this is highly dangerous for contractors and they face inevitable demise.

Though we, as an industry, have planned to contribute about 7% to the GDP this year, we now know that we are unable to reach these figures. Budget allocations related to the construction industry are as follows:

| Project | Rs. Million |
|---|---|
| Central Expressway Kadawatha - Meerigama Section | 81,300 |
| Maintenance, Widening and Improvement of Road Network and Connected Bridges | 47,800 |
| Central Expressway Pothuhera - Rambukkana Section | 34,000 |
| Mahaweli Water Security Investment Program | 32,500 |
| Port Access Elevated Highway Project and Interchanges | 28,400 |
| Stimulating Loan Scheme for Re-energizing the SME Development Sector | 20,000 |
| Completion of Gampaha - Attanagalle - Minuwangoda, Polgahawela - Pothuhera, Aluthgama - Mathugama and | 20,000 |
| Tambuttegama Water Supply Projects which commenced under foreign financing and subsequently halted | 20,000 |
| Inclusive Connectivity and Development Project (Rehabilitation of Rural Roads) | 18,080 |
| Urban Regeneration Programme for relocation of underserved settlements (Colombo/Suburbs) | 18,035 |
| Rehabilitation & Improvement of Rail Fleet, Track & Signaling System | 16,400 |
| Completion of Flyovers at Baladaksha Mawatha, Kohuwala and Getambe | 13,400 |
| Providing Bio-medical Equipment to Hospitals | 13,325 |
| Science & Technology Human Resource Development Project | 12,300 |
| Primary Health Care System Enhancing Project | 12,190 |
| Colombo Suburban Railway Efficiency Improvement Project | 11,525 |
| Completion of activities of existing Water Supply Schemes | 9,300 |
| Health System Enhancement Project | 9,260 |
| Climate Resilience Multi-phase Programmatic Approach Project | 9,080 |

## *Immediate/Urgent Requests to the Government*

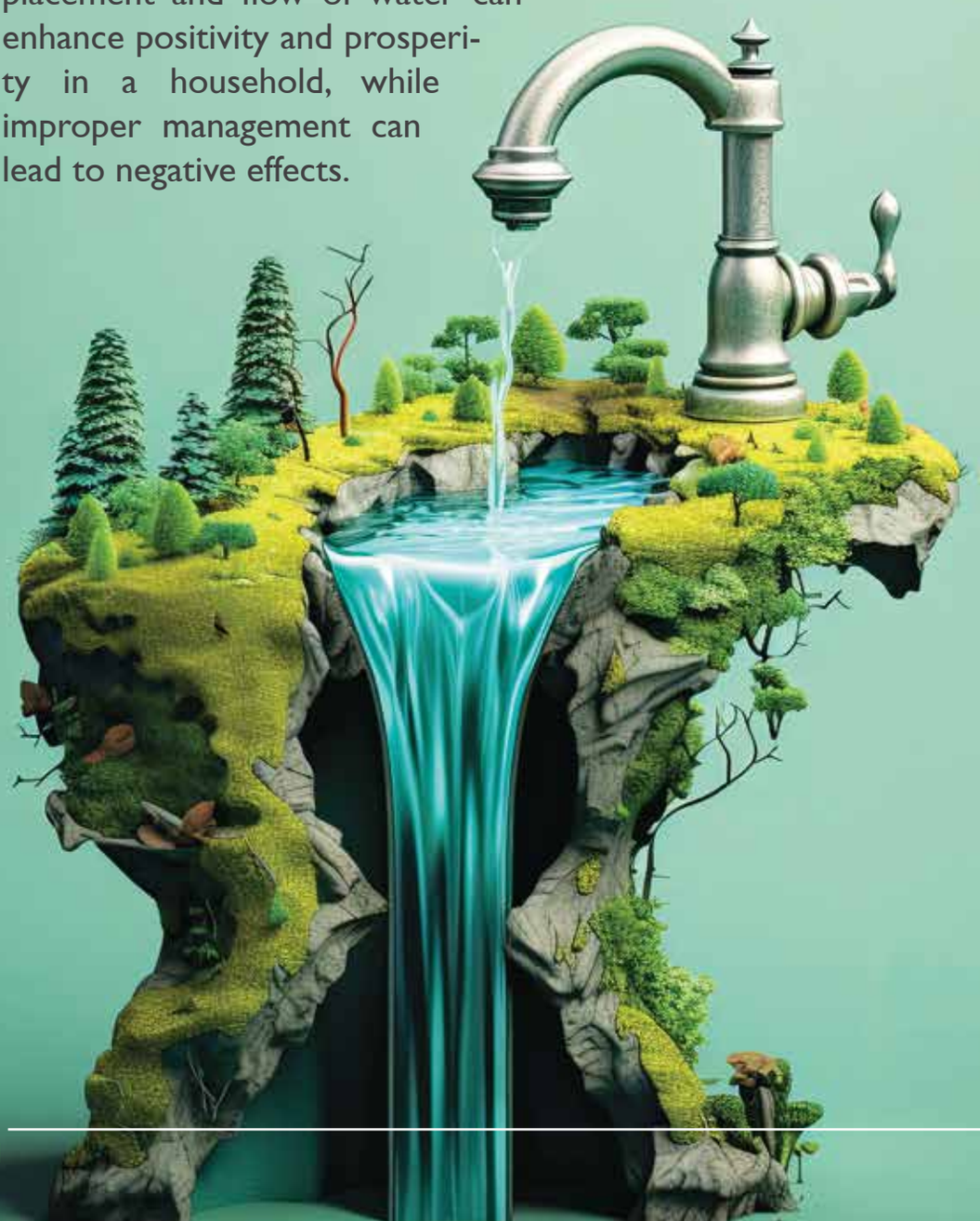
In the future, to support the Construction Industry, we hope that given its anti-corruption policies and the good governance that is seen today, the government encourages FDIs (Foreign Direct Investment), PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships), Private Sector Projects & Foreign-Funded Projects within the Construction Industry.

To help us travel this difficult journey in 2025, we request the government's immediate attention to the approval of the Cabinet paper which has already been finalised by the industry and handed over to the Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development, Construction and Housing. We urgently require its approval and the issuance of relevant directives.

We also recommend that the government, together with Construction Industry Development Authority (CIDA), create a system for the fair distribution of work so that contractors receive fair shares of work, for their survival.

# BEST WATER FLOW DIRECTION AS PER VASTU

Water, one of the five essential elements, holds significant importance in Vastu Shastra. It is believed to be a source of life and has a profound impact on the environment and human well-being. The correct placement and flow of water can enhance positivity and prosperity in a household, while improper management can lead to negative effects.



## IDEAL DIRECTIONS FOR WATER FLOW

According to Vastu Shastra, the best directions for the flow of water are the north and northeast. These directions are considered auspicious and are believed to bring wealth, health, and prosperity. Water bodies or sources of water such as wells, ponds, and tanks should ideally be located in these directions.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NORTH AND NORTHEAST DIRECTIONS

The north direction is associated with wealth and prosperity, governed by Lord Kubera, the deity of wealth. The northeast direction, also known as 'Ishanya,' is considered sacred and is governed by Lord Shiva. Water flow towards these directions is believed to enhance the positive energy in the house, leading to the well-being of its occupants.

# PLACEMENT OF WATER SOURCES

## WELLS AND BOREWELLS

Wells and borewells are significant water sources in many households. According to Vastu, these should be dug in the northeast direction. If this is not feasible, the next best option is the east direction. Avoid placing wells in the southwest, northwest, or southeast as it may lead to financial losses and health issues.

## OVERHEAD WATER TANKS

Overhead water tanks should be placed in the southwest direction. This placement ensures stability and prevents leakage of wealth. Placing them in the northeast is highly inauspicious and can lead to financial difficulties and health problems. This is the best water tank position as per Vastu.

## UNDERGROUND WATER TANKS

Underground water tanks should ideally be in the north or northeast direction. This placement helps in harnessing positive energy and ensures a continuous flow of wealth and prosperity.

# WATER FLOW IN BATHROOMS AND KITCHENS

## BATHROOM WATER FLOW

Bathrooms should be located in the west or northwest direction of the house. The water outlets should be in the northeast, east, or north direction. This ensures that the used water flows out efficiently without creating any negative energy.

## KITCHEN WATER FLOW

In the kitchen, the sink should be placed in the northeast direction. The water should flow towards the northeast, north, or east. This setup is believed to maintain a balance between fire (the stove) and water elements, ensuring harmony in the household.

## PONDS AND FOUNTAINS

Ponds and fountains are beautiful additions to any house and can significantly enhance the aesthetic appeal. According to Vastu, these should be placed in the north or northeast direction. Flowing water in these areas symbolizes the flow of positive energy and wealth into the house.

## SWIMMING POOLS

Swimming pools should ideally be located in the northeast or east direction. If this is not possible, the north direction is also acceptable. Avoid placing swimming pools in the south, west, or southwest as it may lead to adverse effects on health and finances.

## RAINWATER HARVESTING AND VASTU

Rainwater harvesting is an excellent way to conserve water and ensure its availability throughout the year. According to Vastu, the best direction for rainwater harvesting systems is the northeast. This not only helps in water conservation but also enhances the positive energy flow in the house.

# COMMON VASTU DOS AND DON'TS FOR WATER FLOW

## DOS

- Ensure water flows towards the north or northeast direction.
- Place overhead water tanks in the southwest direction.
- Dig wells and borewells in the north east or east direction.
- Position underground water tanks in the north or northeast.

## DON'TS

- Avoid placing water sources in the southwest, southeast, or northwest.
- Do not place overhead water tanks in the northeast direction.
- Avoid water stagnation in any part of the house as it can lead to negative energy buildup.

# REMEDIES FOR VASTU DEFECTS RELATED TO WATER FLOW

## CORRECTIVE MEASURES

If there are existing water sources in inauspicious directions, certain remedies can be implemented to mitigate negative effects. For instance, placing a mirror facing the water source can help redirect the flow of energy. Additionally, installing Vastu pyramids or crystals can help neutralize negative energy.

## PROFESSIONAL CONSULTATION

For significant Vastu defects, it is advisable to consult a Vastu expert. They can provide personalized solutions and suggest structural changes if necessary. Professional guidance ensures that all aspects of Vastu are considered, leading to a harmonious and prosperous living environment.

## CONCLUSION

Understanding and implementing the principles of water flow direction according to Vastu Shastra can significantly impact the harmony and prosperity of a household. By ensuring the correct placement and flow of water, one can harness positive energy, leading to a balanced and fulfilling life. Whether you are planning a new house or looking to improve an existing one, incorporating these Vastu tips can make a substantial difference.

Courtesy : oriplast

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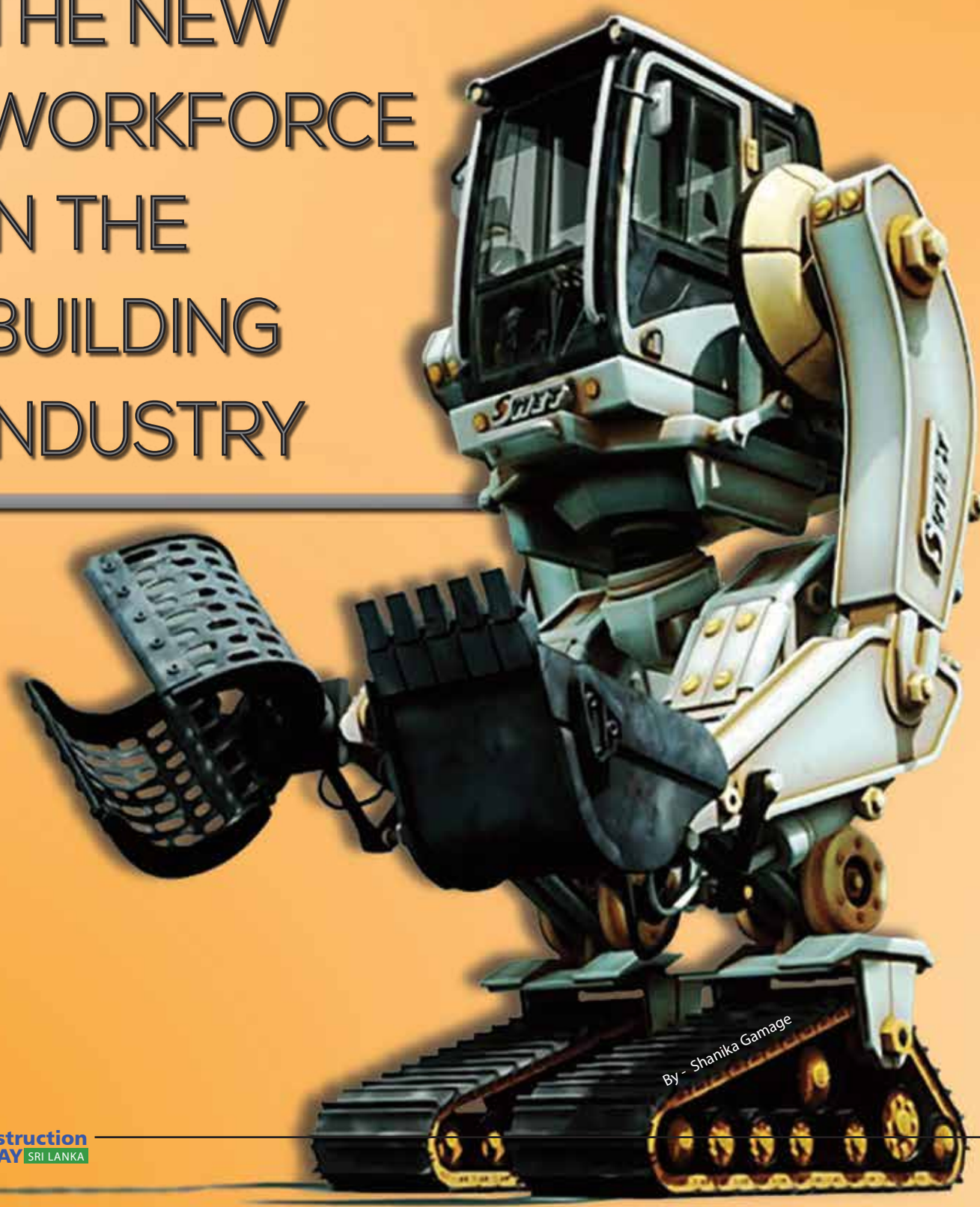
# CONSTRUCTION ROBOTS

## THE NEW WORKFORCE IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY



By - Shanika Gamage

The construction industry is undergoing a significant transformation, as robotics and automation begin to reshape the way we build. With advancements in technology, construction robots are emerging as a revolutionary force in the industry, driving efficiency, enhancing safety, and even addressing labor shortages. As the demand for faster, more cost-effective construction grows, robots are increasingly becoming an integral part of the workforce.

## THE RISE OF ROBOTIC CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT

The integration of robots into construction is not a far-off dream but a reality already taking shape on construction sites worldwide. From autonomous vehicles to 3D-printing robots, these machines are capable of performing tasks that were once exclusively carried out by human workers. The driving factors behind this shift include the need to reduce labor costs, improve precision, increase productivity, and address growing concerns over safety.

A prime example of robotic innovation in construction is **Boston Dynamics' Spot robot,** which has been used on construction sites to navigate difficult terrain and capture data in real time. This robot, equipped with sensors and cameras, can inspect sites, perform detailed scans, and even detect issues such as structural weaknesses or safety hazards. The ability to gather and analyze data quickly enables project managers to make informed decisions, saving time and costs.

Similarly, **The ICON Project** in Austin, Texas, takes the concept of robotic construction to the next level. The company has developed a 3D printer capable of printing entire homes, dramatically reducing the cost and time required for construction. The technology has been deployed in various projects, including affordable housing, and holds the potential to revolutionize homebuilding across the globe.

## EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY BOOSTS

The construction industry's traditional reliance on manual labor has often led to delays, inefficiencies, and human error. Construction robots, however, work tirelessly, carrying out repetitive tasks with precision and speed. This has a direct impact on productivity and completion timelines.

For instance, **Fastbrick Robotics,** an Australian company, has developed the **Hadrian X,** a robot bricklaying machine that can lay bricks at an astonishing rate—up to 1,000 bricks per hour. By using the Hadrian X, construction projects can be completed much faster and at a lower cost, as fewer workers are needed for manual labor. This increase in efficiency is a key driver in the adoption of robotic technologies, especially in large-scale projects where speed and cost reduction are essential.

Moreover, robotic equipment such as **demolition robots** have revolutionized the way buildings are torn down. Companies like **Brokk** manufacture machines capable of performing demolition tasks in tight, hazardous spaces. These robots can work in environments too dangerous for human workers, improving efficiency and reducing downtime on projects.

## ENHANCING SAFETY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

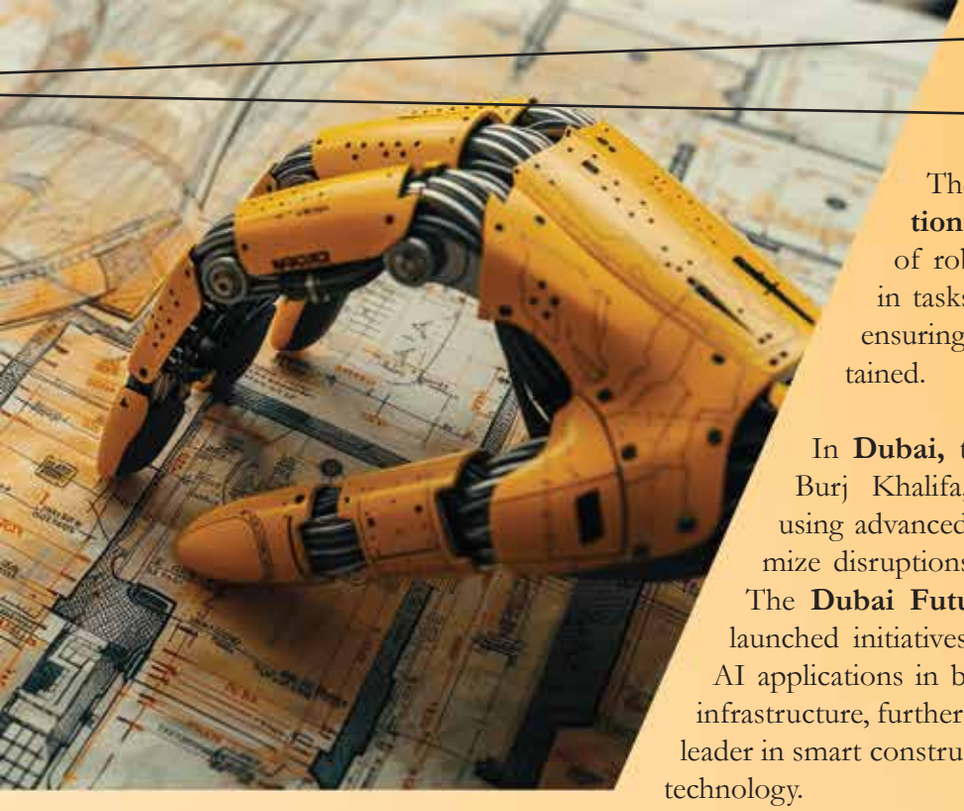
Safety remains a major concern in the construction industry, with workers facing risks from heavy machinery, falls, and exposure to hazardous materials. Robots offer a promising solution by reducing human exposure to dangerous tasks.

For example, **Built Robotics,** a US-based company, has created autonomous excavation machines that can dig trenches and move earth without human intervention. These machines are equipped with advanced sensors and artificial intelligence (AI), enabling them to operate safely in complex environments while minimizing the risk of accidents. Another innovative development is the use of robotic exoskeletons, which help construction workers lift heavy loads without straining their bodies. These wearable devices are currently being tested in Japan, where the construction workforce is aging, and there is a growing need for solutions that allow workers to carry out physically demanding tasks safely and effectively.

## GLOBAL EXAMPLES OF ROBOTIC CONSTRUCTION APPLICATIONS

Internationally, countries are increasingly adopting construction robotics to stay ahead in the competitive global market. In the **United Kingdom,** the construction sector is experimenting with autonomous robots for tasks such as material handling, surveying, and even bricklaying. **The London-based company, Construction Robotics,** is using robotic arms to assist with labor-intensive tasks, reducing strain on human workers and speeding up construction timelines.

In **Singapore,** one of the world's leading cities in urban innovation, robots are being used for the construction of high-rise buildings.



The **Singapore Building and Construction Authority (BCA**) has piloted the use of robots that can carry materials and assist in tasks like welding and painting, all while ensuring high-quality standards are maintained.

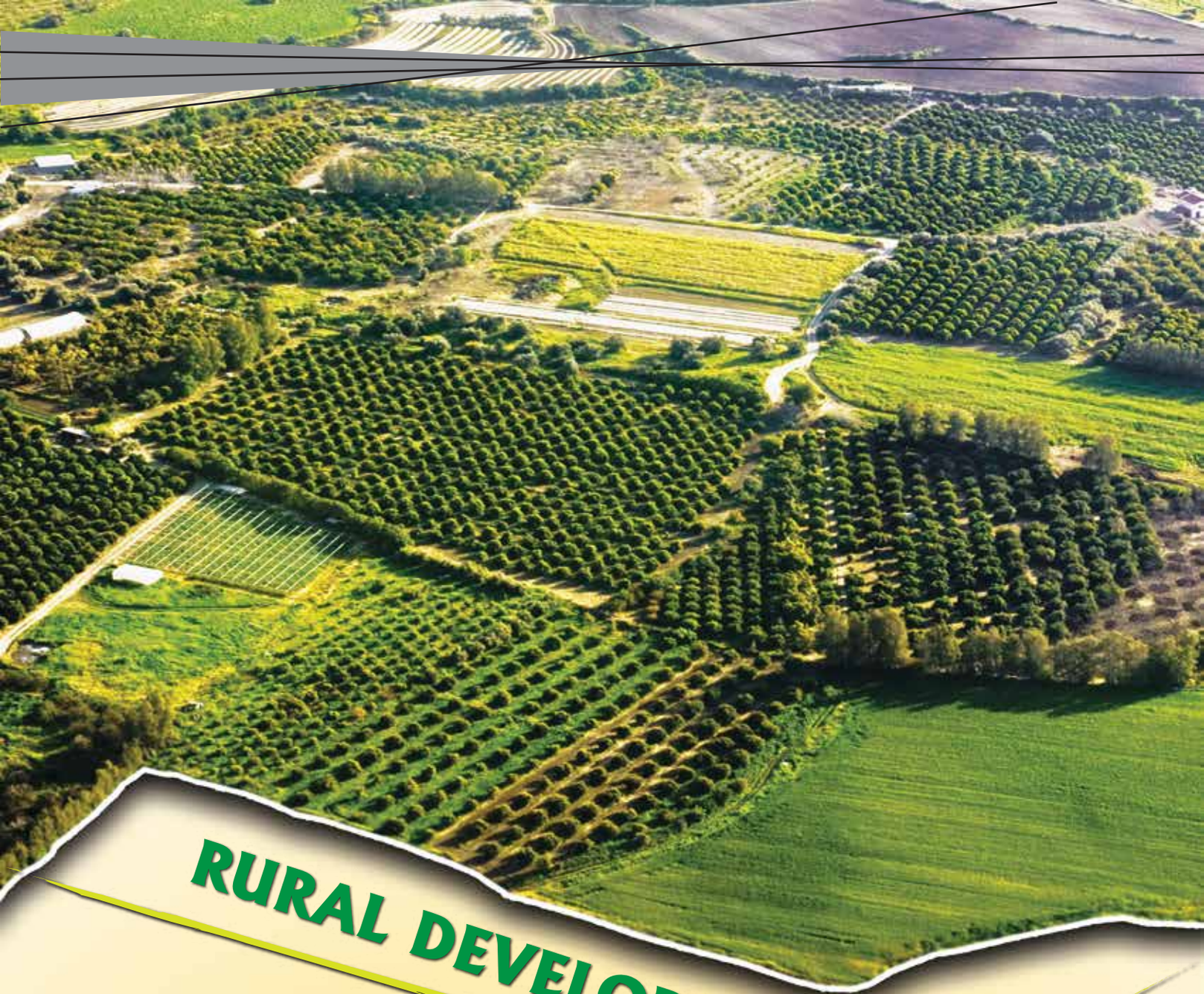
In **Dubai,** the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa, is undergoing renovations using advanced robotic equipment to minimize disruptions and ensure worker safety. The **Dubai Future Foundation** has also launched initiatives to explore robotic and AI applications in building the city's future infrastructure, further positioning Dubai as a leader in smart construction technology.

## THE FUTURE OF ROBOTIC CONSTRUCTION

The future of construction robotics is bright, with the potential to fundamentally change the industry. As robots become more advanced, they will take on even more complex tasks, such as structural assembly and finishing work. The rise of **collaborative robots,** or cobots, which work alongside human workers, will further enhance productivity by combining the strengths of both human creativity and robotic efficiency. Additionally, as the technology continues to evolve, costs are expected to decrease, making robotic construction equipment accessible to smaller firms and projects. This democratization of technology will help bridge the gap between large construction companies and smaller contractors, fostering innovation across the industry.

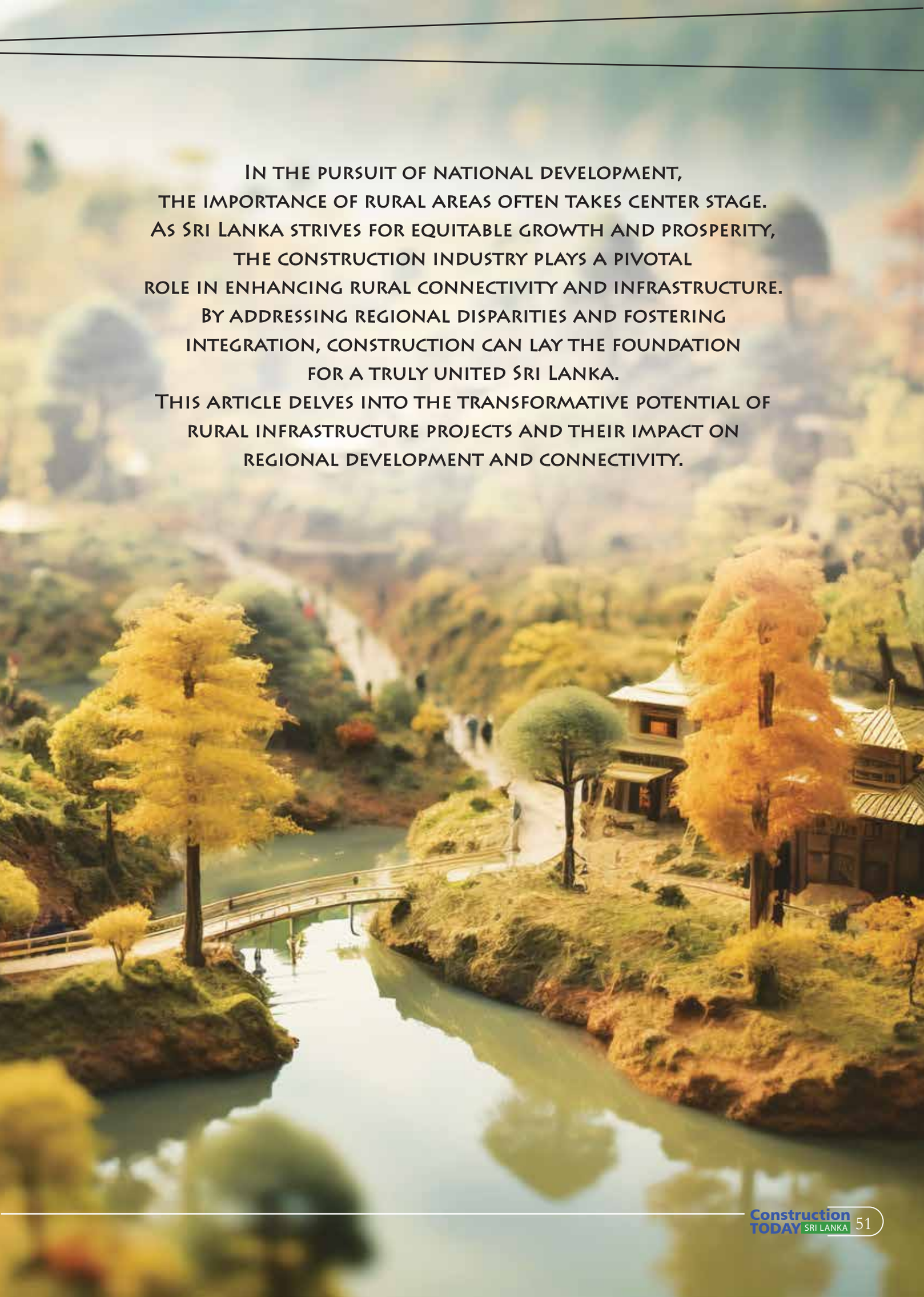
## CONCLUSION

Construction robots are no longer a futuristic concept; they are the new workforce reshaping the building industry. With advancements in robotics, the construction sector is becoming more efficient, safer, and cost-effective. International examples, from Boston Dynamics' Spot robot to Dubai's AI-driven infrastructure, illustrate the growing role of robots in modern construction. As technology continues to progress, robots will likely become an even more integral part of the workforce, driving innovation and transformation in the global construction industry.



# RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONNECTIVITY: THE ROLE OF CONSTRUCTION IN BUILDING A UNITED SRI LANKA

By - Shanika Gamage



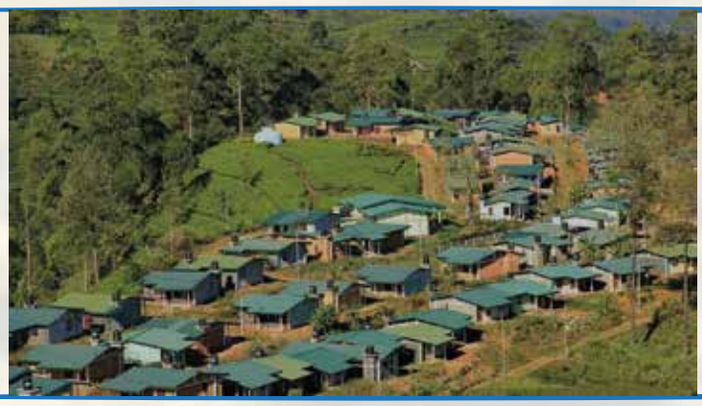
In the pursuit of national development, the importance of rural areas often takes center stage. As Sri Lanka strives for equitable growth and prosperity, the construction industry plays a pivotal role in enhancing rural connectivity and infrastructure. By addressing regional disparities and fostering integration, construction can lay the foundation for a truly united Sri Lanka.

This article delves into the transformative potential of rural infrastructure projects and their impact on regional development and connectivity.

## THE CURRENT STATE OF RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN SRI LANKA

Rural Sri Lanka, home to the majority of the population, faces significant challenges in terms of infrastructure. Many areas lack basic amenities such as reliable roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and utility services. Poor connectivity not only hampers economic growth but also perpetuates social and economic inequalities.

The government's focus on uplifting rural areas through targeted infrastructure development is crucial for bridging these gaps. By investing in rural construction projects, the country can unlock the untapped potential of its regions and create a cohesive and prosperous society.



## THE ROLE OF CONSTRUCTION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Improving Transportation Networks

Reliable transportation is the backbone of rural development. Upgrading rural roads, building bridges, and enhancing public transport systems enable better connectivity between villages, towns, and cities. This facilitates the movement of goods, services, and people, thereby boosting local economies and creating employment opportunities.

### 2. Access to Education and Healthcare

Construction projects that focus on building schools, vocational training centers, and healthcare facilities are vital for improving the quality of life in rural areas. Enhanced access to education and healthcare not only empowers individuals but also contributes to the overall socio-economic progress of communities.

### 3. Promoting Agricultural Growth

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of rural livelihoods in Sri Lanka. Construction projects aimed at developing irrigation systems, storage facilities, and marketplaces can significantly enhance agricultural productivity and reduce post-harvest losses. Improved infrastructure ensures that farmers can transport their produce efficiently, access new markets, and increase their incomes.

### 4. Encouraging Tourism in Rural Areas

Sri Lanka's rural landscapes, rich in natural beauty and cultural heritage, offer immense potential for tourism. Developing eco-tourism infrastructure such as trails, accommodation, and visitor centers can attract both domestic and international tourists. This not only generates revenue but also creates jobs for local communities.

## ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY: A CATALYST FOR UNITY

### 1. National Integration Through Connectivity

Connectivity is a key driver of national unity. By linking rural and urban areas through well-planned infrastructure, the construction sector can facilitate cultural exchange, economic interaction, and mutual understanding. This reduces the isolation of rural communities and fosters a sense of belonging to the larger national framework.

### 2. Reducing Regional Disparities

Targeted investments in rural connectivity can address the stark disparities between developed urban centers and underdeveloped rural areas. Improved infrastructure ensures equitable access to resources, opportunities, and services, thereby promoting balanced regional growth.

### 3. Strengthening Economic Linkages

Rural connectivity enhances economic integration by linking production centers in rural areas with consumption and export hubs in urban regions. This not only boosts rural incomes but also contributes to the national economy by creating a seamless supply chain.

## CHALLENGES IN RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Despite its potential, rural infrastructure development in Sri Lanka faces several challenges:

### 1. Funding Constraints

Limited financial resources often impede the execution of large-scale rural projects. Securing funding through public-private partnerships (PPPs), international aid, or innovative financing mechanisms is crucial.

### 2. Geographical and Environmental Barriers

Sri Lanka's diverse topography and susceptibility to natural disasters pose significant challenges to construction in rural areas. Adopting sustainable and resilient construction practices can mitigate these risks.

### 3. Community Engagement

Lack of community involvement in project planning and execution can lead to mismatched priorities and resistance to change. Ensuring active participation and addressing local concerns are essential for the success of rural development initiatives.

## STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE RURAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

**1. Prioritizing Strategic Projects**

Identifying and prioritizing projects with the highest impact on rural development is essential. This includes focusing on areas with high poverty rates, agricultural potential, or tourism opportunities.

**2. Leveraging Technology**

Integrating advanced technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for project planning, drone surveys for monitoring, and digital tools for project management can improve efficiency and transparency in rural construction.

**3. Promoting Sustainability**

Sustainable construction practices, such as using eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient designs, ensure that infrastructure projects contribute to environmental conservation while meeting community needs.

**4. Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)**

Collaborating with private sector players can bring in additional expertise, funding, and innovation. Clear policies and incentives for PPPs can encourage private sector participation in rural infrastructure projects.

## CASE STUDIES: SUCCESSFUL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

**1. Rural Bridges Program**

The government's initiative to build small-scale bridges in remote areas has significantly improved connectivity, enabling easier access to schools, markets, and healthcare facilities.

**2. Irrigation Modernization Projects**

Efforts to modernize irrigation systems in rural Sri Lanka have boosted agricultural productivity, ensuring water security for farmers and reducing dependency on erratic rainfall.

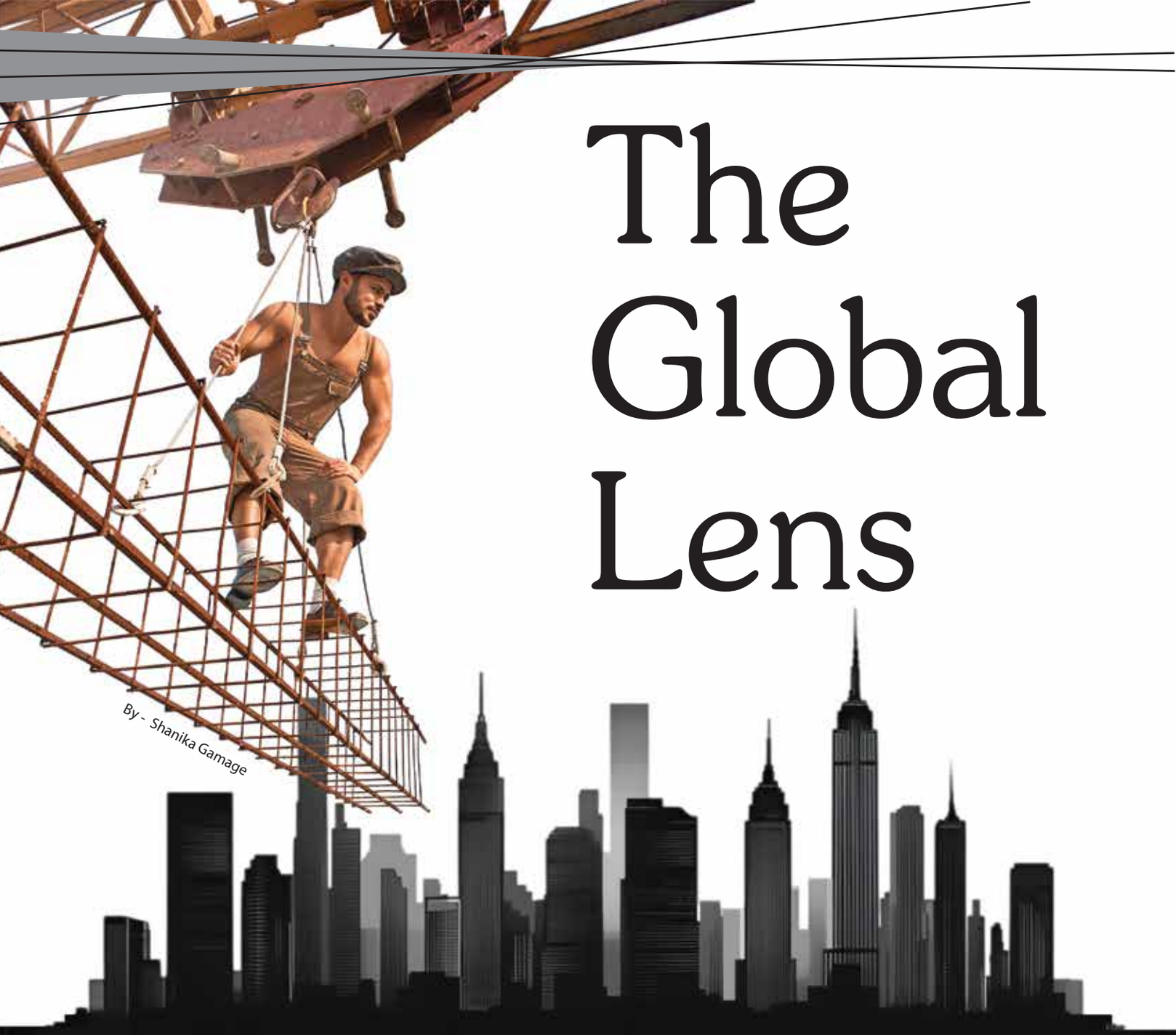
**3. Community-Driven Development Projects**

Programs that involve local communities in project planning and execution, such as building village roads or community centers, have fostered ownership and ensured the sustainability of infrastructure.

## *THE PATH AHEAD: BUILDING A UNITED SRI LANKA*

Rural development and connectivity are not just about building roads and bridges; they are about creating opportunities, enhancing quality of life, and fostering national unity. The construction sector holds the key to achieving these goals by driving transformative change in rural Sri Lanka.

As the new government takes charge, a renewed focus on rural infrastructure can unlock the true potential of the nation. By addressing funding challenges, embracing technology, and promoting inclusivity, Sri Lanka can build a robust foundation for a united and prosperous future. The journey may be challenging, but the rewards—a thriving, connected, and harmonious Sri Lanka—are well worth the effort.



# The Global Lens

By - Shanika Gamage

## Attracting Foreign Investment into Sri Lanka's Construction Sector

The construction industry is a cornerstone of any nation's economic growth, and Sri Lanka is no exception. With a new government in place, the focus has shifted toward rebuilding confidence in the economy and positioning the country as a lucrative destination for foreign investment. The construction sector, offering high returns and significant socio-economic benefits, presents a compelling opportunity for international funding and partnerships. This article explores strategies the new government might employ to attract foreign investment and foster collaborations in Sri Lanka's construction landscape.

## 1. CREATING AN INVESTOR-FRIENDLY POLICY FRAMEWORK

A stable and transparent policy environment is critical to attracting foreign investors. The government can focus on:

**A. Streamlined Regulations**
Simplifying bureaucratic processes and reducing red tape can make it easier for foreign investors to enter the Sri Lankan market. Introducing fast-track approvals for construction projects can be a significant incentive.

**B. Tax Incentives and Financial Benefits**
Offering tax holidays, reduced tariffs on construction materials, and repatriation of profits can enhance the attractiveness of investing in Sri Lanka.

**C. Bilateral Investment Treaties**
Establishing or strengthening bilateral investment agreements with key trading partners can provide added security and predictability for foreign investors.

## 2. SHOWCASING INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

To capture global attention, the government must actively market its construction projects. This can be achieved through:

**A. International Roadshows**
Hosting roadshows and participating in global investment forums to showcase the potential of Sri Lanka's construction sector.

**B. Digital Marketing Platforms**
Developing an online portal that lists upcoming construction projects, their expected returns, and government support mechanisms can streamline investor outreach.

**C. Flagship Projects**
Highlighting high-profile infrastructure projects, such as smart cities, transportation hubs, and renewable energy facilities, can serve as anchor investments to draw more foreign interest.


## 3. STRENGTHENING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPPS)

PPPs offer a balanced risk-reward structure that is attractive to foreign investors. The government can focus on:

**A. Policy Clarity**
Developing clear guidelines for PPPs, including risk-sharing mechanisms and dispute resolution frameworks, to build investor confidence.

**B. Viable Project Structuring**
Ensuring projects are financially viable and aligned with global best practices can enhance their appeal.

**C. Co-Investment Opportunities**
Encouraging local companies to co-invest with foreign partners can create a collaborative ecosystem that leverages local expertise.

## 4. LEVERAGING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES (SEZS)

SEZs can act as catalysts for attracting foreign investment. By offering dedicated zones for construction-related activities, the government can:

**A. Provide Incentives**
Offer land at subsidized rates, tax exemptions, and expedited clearances within these zones.

**B. Facilitate Clusters**
Develop industry-specific clusters to encourage synergy among construction, technology, and manufacturing sectors.

**C. Encourage Innovation**
Position SEZs as hubs for sustainable and smart construction practices, appealing to global investors focused on green initiatives.

## *5. PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN FINANCING*

Global investors are increasingly focusing on sustainability. Sri Lanka can leverage this trend by:

**A. Adopting Green Building Standards**
Mandating or encouraging the use of sustainable construction materials and practices to align with international norms.

**B. Accessing Green Bonds**
Issuing green bonds specifically for environmentally friendly construction projects can attract ESG-focused investors.

**C. Incentivizing Renewable Energy Integration**
Encouraging the integration of renewable energy in construction projects can further bolster the sector's sustainability credentials.

## *6. ADDRESSING INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS*

To attract international funding, Sri Lanka must ensure that basic infrastructure is in place. The government can:

**A. Enhance Connectivity**
Invest in road, rail, and port infrastructure to facilitate the movement of goods and labor for construction projects.

**B. Digital Transformation**
Develop digital infrastructure to support smart construction technologies and real-time project management.

**C. Utilities and Services**
Ensure reliable access to electricity, water, and other essential services for large-scale projects.

## *7. BUILDING INVESTOR CONFIDENCE*

A key factor in attracting foreign investment is fostering trust. The government can:

**A. Enhance Transparency**
Establishing a transparent procurement process and ensuring adherence to anti-corruption measures will reassure investors.

**B. Provide Guarantees**
Offering government-backed guarantees for large projects can mitigate perceived risks.

**C. Regular Communication**
Maintaining open lines of communication with investors and addressing their concerns promptly will build long-term relationships.


## *8. CULTIVATING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS*

Strategic alliances with global organizations can bring expertise and funding to Sri Lanka's construction sector. The government can:

**A. Engage Multilateral Agencies**
Collaborating with the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and similar institutions can provide both funding and technical expertise.

**B. Encourage Foreign Construction Giants**
Inviting renowned international construction firms to bid for large projects can enhance credibility and attract further investment.

**C. Foster Regional Cooperation**
Strengthening ties with neighboring countries for joint infrastructure development projects can open new avenues for funding.

## *9. EMPOWERING THE LOCAL WORKFORCE*

Foreign investors often seek skilled labor for their projects. The government can:

**A. Focus on Skill Development**
Introduce training programs aligned with global construction standards to enhance workforce quality.

**B. Facilitate Knowledge Transfer**
Encourage foreign firms to partner with local companies to share expertise and best practices.\

**C. Promote Employment**
Emphasize job creation as a key aspect of foreign investment to gain public and political support.

## *10. OVERCOMING CHALLENGES*

While the potential is immense, there are challenges to attracting foreign investment. The government must address:

**A. Political Stability**
Ensuring consistent policies and a stable political environment is essential for long-term investments.

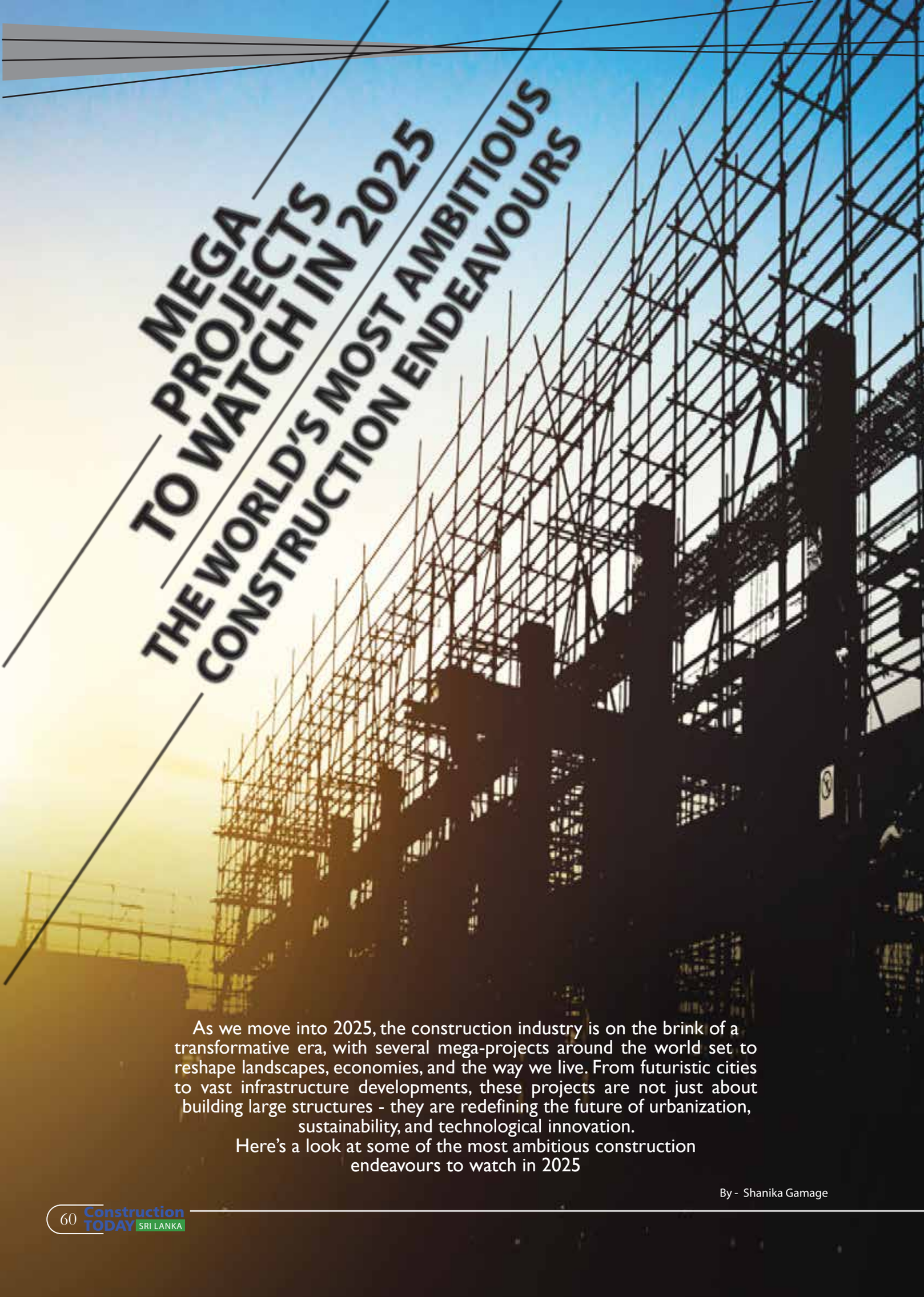
**B. Currency Fluctuations**
Implementing measures to stabilize the local currency can reduce financial risks for investors.

**C. Social Acceptance**
Engaging with local communities to highlight the benefits of foreign investment can mitigate resistance.

## *CONCLUSION*

Attracting foreign investment into Sri Lanka's construction sector requires a multi-faceted approach combining policy reforms, strategic partnerships, and robust marketing. By addressing infrastructure gaps, promoting sustainability, and building investor confidence, the new government has the opportunity to transform the construction sector into a global hub for innovation and growth.

With a clear vision and decisive action, Sri Lanka can unlock the potential of its construction industry, creating jobs, enhancing infrastructure, and driving economic prosperity. The challenge lies in execution, but the rewards for getting it right are boundless—a stronger, more resilient Sri Lanka ready to compete on the world stage.



# MEGA PROJECTS TO WATCH IN 2025

## THE WORLD'S MOST AMBITIOUS CONSTRUCTION ENDEAVOURS

As we move into 2025, the construction industry is on the brink of a transformative era, with several mega-projects around the world set to reshape landscapes, economies, and the way we live. From futuristic cities to vast infrastructure developments, these projects are not just about building large structures - they are redefining the future of urbanization, sustainability, and technological innovation.

Here's a look at some of the most ambitious construction endeavours to watch in 2025

By - Shanika Gamage

# NEOM CITY

## – SAUDI ARABIA


Arguably the most ambitious project of the 21st century, **NEOM** is a $500 billion futuristic city being developed in the deserts of north-western Saudi Arabia. NEOM aims to create a sustainable urban environment powered by renewable energy, with smart city technologies integrated into every aspect of life. Spanning over 10,200 square miles - larger than many countries - NEOM will feature cities, ports, research hubs, entertainment districts, and tourist resorts.

One of the most innovative aspects of NEOM is **The Line**, a 170-kilometer linear city designed with no cars, streets, or traditional urban sprawl. Instead, the city will feature two parallel skyscrapers, housing 9 million residents, with everything residents need within a 5-minute walk. It's a bold vision for a zero-carbon city, where AI, robotics, and green technologies will be seamlessly integrated into daily life.

This megacity will also serve as a test bed for new technologies, from flying cars to AI-driven services, and will be a beacon for sustainable living. Scheduled to break ground in 2025, NEOM is a project that is attracting global attention due to its scale and ground breaking vision for the future.

# BULLET TRAIN

## PROJECT– INDIA


India is set to embark on its first-ever high-speed rail network, connecting Mumbai and Ahmedabad through a $15 billion bullet train project. With speeds of up to 320 kilometers per hour, this rail corridor will reduce travel time between the two cities from 8 hours to just under 3 hours. Japan's Shinkansen technology is being used for the project, and a consortium of Indian and Japanese companies is involved in its construction.

Set to be completed by 2028, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train is part of a larger plan to revolutionize India's transportation infrastructure, addressing the country's chronic congestion issues and improving connectivity across urban centers. As the project progresses in 2025, it will be a major milestone in India's infrastructure development, laying the groundwork for more high-speed rail networks across the country.

# GRAND PARIS

## PROJECT– FRANCE

One of Europe's largest urban regeneration projects, The Grand Paris Project, is set to redefine Paris' landscape over the next decade. With a €35 billion investment, the initiative will create a new urban infrastructure for the French capital, including new transport systems, housing, and business districts. A key component is the expansion of the Paris Métro, with new lines and extensions that will improve connectivity between the city center and its suburbs.

In 2025, the Grand Paris Express will see the completion of several new metro lines and stations, creating a fully integrated public transportation network that will serve millions of residents. The project also includes the construction of new sustainable housing developments, commercial centers, and green spaces, with an emphasis on reducing carbon emissions and creating a more livable urban environment.

The Grand Paris Project is an example of how major European cities are embracing regeneration and innovation to address the challenges of urbanization and sustainability.

# DUBAI CREEK TOWER

– UAE

The Dubai Creek Tower is poised to become the tallest building in the world upon completion in 2025. Standing at a staggering height of over 1,300 meters, the tower will surpass the Burj Khalifa and offer an unparalleled view of the city. Designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, the tower draws inspiration from the lily flower and features a unique design that combines modern architecture with traditional Middle Eastern elements.

The tower will not only be a feat of engineering but also a major hub for luxury living, hotels, and office spaces. It is part of the larger Dubai Creek Harbour development, a master-planned community that will include residential areas, shopping centers, and leisure facilities. As a symbol of Dubai's commitment to architectural innovation and modernity, the Dubai Creek Tower will solidify the city's position as a global destination for cutting-edge design.

# THAMES TIDEWAY TUNNEL

## – LONDON / UK

Known as the **"Super Sewer",** the Thames Tideway Tunnel is one of the UK's largest infrastructure projects, aimed at tackling London's wastewater problems. This 25-kilometer tunnel will run beneath the River Thames and collect untreated sewage that is currently discharged into the river during heavy rainfall. The project, costing around £4.9 billion, is expected to significantly reduce pollution and protect the city's waterways forfuture generations.

Set to be completed by 2025, the Thames Tideway Tunnel is a vital part of London's long-term strategy to ensure sustainability and environmental protection. It will not only help clean the city's rivers but also improve public health and enhance the overall quality of life for Londoners.

# CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL

## – UNITED STATES


In the United States, one of the most ambitious transportation projects is the California High-Speed Rail, which aims to connect the Bay Area to Southern California through a $77 billion rail network. Although the project has faced delays, sections of the rail line are expected to open by 2025, starting with the Central Valley segment.

The California High-Speed Rail will drastically reduce travel times between major cities, promoting regional connectivity and reducing traffic congestion on the state's highways. This project aligns with California's climate goals by offering a clean and efficient alternative to car travel, cutting down on emissions, and contributing to the state's broader sustainability efforts.

# NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

## – MEXICO

In 2025, Mexico's Nuevo Aeropuerto Internacional de México (NAICM) is expected to open, becoming one of the largest and most advanced airports in the world. With an investment of over $13 billion, the airport will handle up to 68 million passengers annually, significantly increasing Mexico's capacity to serve international travelers.

Located just outside Mexico City, the airport will feature cutting-edge facilities, including green technologies to minimize environmental impact, such as rainwater harvesting, solar power, and energy-efficient systems. This massive infrastructure project is expected to be a major catalyst for economic growth in the region, boosting tourism and business opportunities.

# CONCLUSION

As we look ahead to 2025, these mega-projects stand as testaments to human ingenuity and the drive for progress in construction, infrastructure, and urban development. Whether it's NEOM, the high-speed rail networks in India and California, or the regeneration of cities like Paris and London, these projects are not only ambitious but also pave the way for sustainable, tech-driven urban futures. They embody the vision of a world where cutting-edge design, sustainability, and technology come together to create a more connected, efficient, and livable global landscape.


## BOC Solar Loan වෙතින් බල ගැන්වෙන ඔබට...

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# SVUM 2025
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Saurashtra
Vepar Udyog Mahamandal

Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel - Chief Minister of Gujarat

11th Edition
SVUM 2025
INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOW

Dr Rohan Karunaratne
President CIOB

Eng. Saliya Kaluarachchi
Secretary CIOB

Mr. Ranji Hewage
Treasurer CIOB

The Ceylon Institute of Builders (CIOB) is set to make a significant impact at the highly anticipated Saurashtra Vepar Udyog Mahamandal (SVUM) 2025 in Gujarat, India, from the 11th – 15th March 2025. This participation signals a new era of collaboration, unlocking business and investment opportunities between Sri Lanka and India.

Since 2001, SVUM has been a catalyst for economic growth, supporting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) while fostering global trade partnerships. It has drawn 1,200 foreign buyers from 60 countries, diplomats from 35 nations, and top government officials, generating business deals worth INR 5,000 crore. The event will be graced by the esteemed presence of Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Bhupendra Patel further underscoring its significance in the global industrial landscape.

CIOB's delegation at SVUM 2025 will actively engage with global industrialists, thought leaders, and policymakers to create lasting collaborations, discover investment opportunities, and showcase Sri Lanka's expertise in sustainable construction and industrial innovation. With a shared vision of inclusive prosperity and responsible growth, CIOB's involvement highlights the increasing synergy between Sri Lanka and India's industrial sectors.

SVUM's dynamic promotional strategy—leveraging digital platforms, media outreach, and targeted invitations—ensures global visibility and engagement. CIOB's presence will not only showcase Sri Lanka's industrial capabilities but also open doors for groundbreaking collaborations on the global stage.


By – Shanika Gamage

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT & THE PRIVATE SECTORS

In today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, collaboration between the government and the private sector has become a cornerstone of successful development initiatives. For the construction industry in Sri Lanka, such partnerships offer immense potential to address infrastructure deficits, enhance efficiency, and drive economic growth. The first issue of 2025 of Sri Lanka Construction Today sheds light on how these collaborations can transform the industry, examining the opportunities, incentives, and implications of government-private sector partnerships.

## THE CASE FOR COLLABORATION

The construction industry is a critical driver of economic growth, providing employment, enhancing connectivity, and fostering social development. However, the challenges of limited public funding, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and a volatile global economy often hinder large-scale project execution. The private sector, with its access to capital, technical expertise, and innovative solutions, can play a pivotal role in bridging these gaps.

Collaborative models such as public-private partnerships (PPPs) provide a framework where the strengths of both entities converge. The government benefits from private sector efficiency and funding, while the private sector gains access to lucrative opportunities in national development projects.


## KEY AREAS OF COLLABORATION

### 1. INFRASTRUVTURE DEVELOPMRNT

Large-scale infrastructure projects, including highways, ports, and airports, require significant investment and technical expertise. Collaborative efforts can:

- Accelerate project timelines.
- Reduce the financial burden on public coffers.
- Introduce cutting-edge technologies and construction methods.

For example, the Colombo Port City project exemplifies how international private investments combined with government oversight can create world-class infrastructure.

### 2. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The demand for affordable housing in Sri Lanka has reached unprecedented levels. Private developers, incentivized by government policies, can contribute to large-scale housing projects, making homeownership accessible to more citizens.

Collaboration in this sector can address:

- Land acquisition challenges through streamlined policies.
- Construction cost reductions via tax incentives.
- Sustainable building practices encouraged by regulatory frameworks

### 3. GREEN & SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

As environmental concerns gain prominence, there is a growing need for sustainable infrastructure. The private sector's innovation capabilities can be harnessed to:

- Develop eco-friendly materials.
- Implement energy-efficient construction practices.
- Incorporate renewable energy solutions into large-scale projects.

## GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES TO FOSTER COLLABORATION

To attract and retain private sector participation, the government must create a conducive environment through strategic incentives and policy frameworks. Key measures include:

### 1. STREAMLINED REGULATORY PROCESSES

Lengthy approval procedures often deter private investors. Simplifying regulations, reducing red tape, and ensuring transparency in processes can enhance investor confidence. For example:

- Establishing single-window clearance systems.
- Digitalizing land acquisition and project approval workflows.
- Introducing time-bound approvals for large-scale projects.

### 2. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

The private sector's willingness to invest often hinges on favorable financial conditions. Tax breaks, low-interest loans, and subsidies can significantly enhance the attractiveness of collaborative projects. Potential initiatives include:

- Tax exemptions for green construction materials.
- Waivers on import duties for specialized construction equipment.
- Government-backed loans for affordable housing projects.

### 3. RISK MITIGATION MECHANISMS

Construction projects inherently carry financial and operational risks. The government can reduce these risks through:

- Guarantees on returns for specific projects.
- Insurance schemes for project delays caused by bureaucratic or external factors.
- Contingency funds to address unforeseen challenges.

### 4. PUBLIC RECOGNITION & TRUST BUILDING

Public perception plays a critical role in the success of government-private sector projects. By ensuring transparency, maintaining ethical practices, and celebrating successful collaborations, both parties can build trust and public support.

## BENEFITS TO THE CONSTRUCTION ECOSYSTEM

### 1. ECONOMIC GROWTH & JOB CREATION

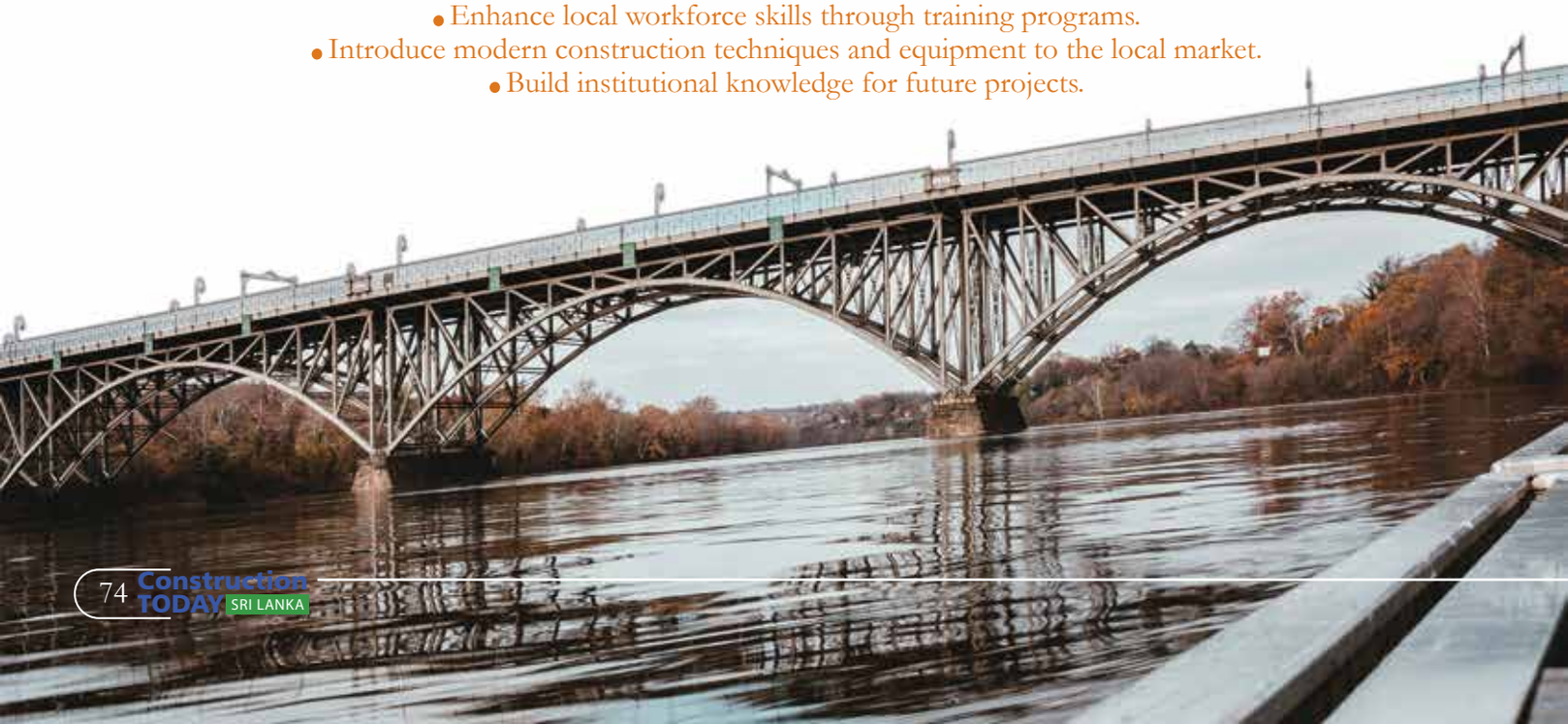
Collaborative projects inject significant capital into the economy, stimulating growth and creating jobs. For instance:

- Infrastructure development creates employment opportunities across various skill levels, from labourers to engineers.
- Supply chain industries, such as materials and logistics, benefit from increased demand.

### 2. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER & CAPACITY BUILDING

Private sector involvement often brings advanced technologies and expertise. Over time, these collaborations can:

- Enhance local workforce skills through training programs.
- Introduce modern construction techniques and equipment to the local market.
- Build institutional knowledge for future projects.



### 3. IMPROVED QUALITY & EFFICIENCY

The private sector's focus on cost-effectiveness and quality control can improve the overall standards of construction projects. This includes:

- Timely project delivery.
- Use of high-quality materials and sustainable practices.
- Adherence to international safety standards.

## ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN COLLABORATION

While the benefits are clear, government-private sector collaborations are not without challenges. Addressing these hurdles is essential for long-term success.

### 1. TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Corruption and lack of transparency in awarding contracts can erode trust. Implementing stringent governance mechanisms, such as independent audits and public disclosure of contracts, can mitigate these issues.

### 2. BALANCING PROFIT & PUBLIC INTRESTS

The private sector's profit motives must align with public welfare goals. Clear contracts that outline roles, responsibilities, and expectations can ensure a balance between profitability and social impact.

### 3. CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

Disputes between stakeholders can delay projects. Establishing neutral arbitration bodies and predefined resolution processes can prevent prolonged conflicts.

### 4. ENSURING LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Short-term private sector involvement can lead to project discontinuity. The government must incentivize long-term partnerships through extended contracts and on-going benefits.

## CASE STUDIES: SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIONS

### 1. THE OUTER CIRCULAR HIGHWAY PROJECT

A public-private partnership model accelerated this critical highway project, improving connectivity and reducing urban congestion. The project highlighted the efficiency of private sector involvement in meeting tight deadlines.

### 2. SMART CITY DEVELOPMENT IN MEGA POLIS

International investors and local contractors collaborated to develop Sri Lanka's first smart city, setting a benchmark for technological integration in urban planning.

## THE ROAD AHEAD

The construction industry's future depends on fostering a collaborative spirit between the government and the private sector. As Sri Lanka's economy rebounds and demand for infrastructure grows, such partnerships can unlock unparalleled opportunities for growth and innovation.

By creating an enabling environment, addressing challenges, and prioritizing sustainability, the government can attract private investment while ensuring public welfare. Together, these stakeholders can build not just physical structures but also a stronger, more resilient Sri Lanka.

## CONCLUSION

Building bridges—both literal and metaphorical—between the government and the private sector is vital for the construction industry's evolution. Collaboration can transform challenges into opportunities, ensuring that Sri Lanka's development agenda is both inclusive and forward-looking.

As the construction ecosystem embraces this new era of partnership, the foundation is laid for a prosperous future where innovation, efficiency, and shared vision drive progress.

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# SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN THE USA

# WHICH ARE THE TOP 7?

# Explore the Top 7 Sustainable Construction Firms in the USA Leading the Way in Eco-friendly Design, Innovation, and Green Building Solutions...

Building owners, businesses, and consumers have grown to expect Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certifications from the United States Green Building Council, as well as other sustainability requirements. While contractors and clients may be reluctant to increase project expenses, Dodge Data & Analytics World Green Building Trends 2016 SmartMarket Report discovered that sustainable construction firms in the USA boost a building's value by 4%.

The following firms are the most successful in terms of design revenue. These sustainable construction firms in the USA are incorporating sustainable practices throughout their projects and business culture to not only reduce their environmental effect but also gain a competitive edge in an era when climate change mitigation and corporate governance are becoming increasingly important to the public.

## What is Sustainable Construction?

The building industry is well-known for its massive carbon footprint, accounting for around 42% of total yearly greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. This is primarily due to the manufacture and transportation of resources, as well as trash generated on-site. There is also embedded carbon from the buildings' lighting, cooling, and heating once they are completed.

Sustainable construction firms in the USA aims to lessen the industry's environmental effect by adhering to six basic principles:

1. Eco-friendly building materials.
2. Water Conservation
3. Waste Reduction
4. Energy Efficiency
5. Indoor air quality.
6. Improved operating and maintenance practices.

Technology is leading the way in putting these principles into practice. For example, Building Information Modeling software generates digital models that include sustainability principles into building throughout the design phase. Another example is prefabrication, which builds construction components off-site to reduce waste and increase on-site efficiency.

Sustainable construction firms in the USA results in a variety of benefits, including decreased operational costs, regulatory compliance, and an improved industry reputation. According to a recent survey, organizations that prioritized ESG in their decision-making saw 28% cumulative growth over five years. Individuals benefit from green buildings because they offer better indoor environments, which improves resident well-being and productivity.

# TOP 7 SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION FIRM IN THE USA

## 1. GENSLER

### PROJECT:
## 110 THE QUEEN'S WALK

*Gensler, a multinational design business, was founded in 1965. The organization is well-known for its studies into workplace design. When it comes to sustainable construction firms in the USA, Gensler uses a systems-based approach to better understand the client's context and challenges.*

*Gensler's strategy has garnered industry plaudits. In 2020, Gensler became the first company to win three COTE Top 10 Awards in a year. The business has also designed Living Building Petal certified projects, like as Etsy's headquarters in New York, NY.*

# 2. ROOF AND REALM

## PROJECT:

# PREFABRICATED MODULAR HOMES

*Roof and Realm builds prefabricated modular homes and ancillary dwelling units (ADUs) from recycled steel. Its product ranges, which include the Realm X Series, Realm Y Series, and Realm Z Series, provide configurable alternatives to meet a variety of demands. The steel construction provides excellent strength and longevity. On the other hand, the modular design allows for efficient on-site assembly, which reduces energy consumption, on-site construction waste, and building delays. This sustainable construction firm in the USA benefits homeowners, developers, and architects looking for sustainable and adaptable housing options.*

# 3. PERKINS & WILL

## PROJECT:

## JACKSON WEST MEDICAL CENTER DORAL CAMPUS, DORAL, FLORIDA

Perkins&Will has a long history of delivering exceptional design work. In recent decades, this sustainable construction firm in the USA has also played a key role in efforts to make the sector more ecologically responsible. Its ethos promotes the use of sustainable methods throughout the design process, including non-toxic materials, energy-efficient systems, and biophilic approaches. The company has also vowed to remove embodied carbon from all commercial interior spaces they build by 2030. This sustainable construction firm in the USA's collection of work encompasses a wide range of typologies, from sports stadiums to offices and laboratories, and exemplifies its purpose to build beautiful environments that benefit the lives of individuals and the larger globe. Perkins&Will also pushes for equity throughout the built environment. The firm has been lauded for its efforts to promote social justice, and it has a program that provides free architectural services to organizations in support of affordable housing, childcare, healthcare, and education projects.

# 4. MILLER HULL PARTNERSHIP PROJECT: EMISSION ZERO HUB

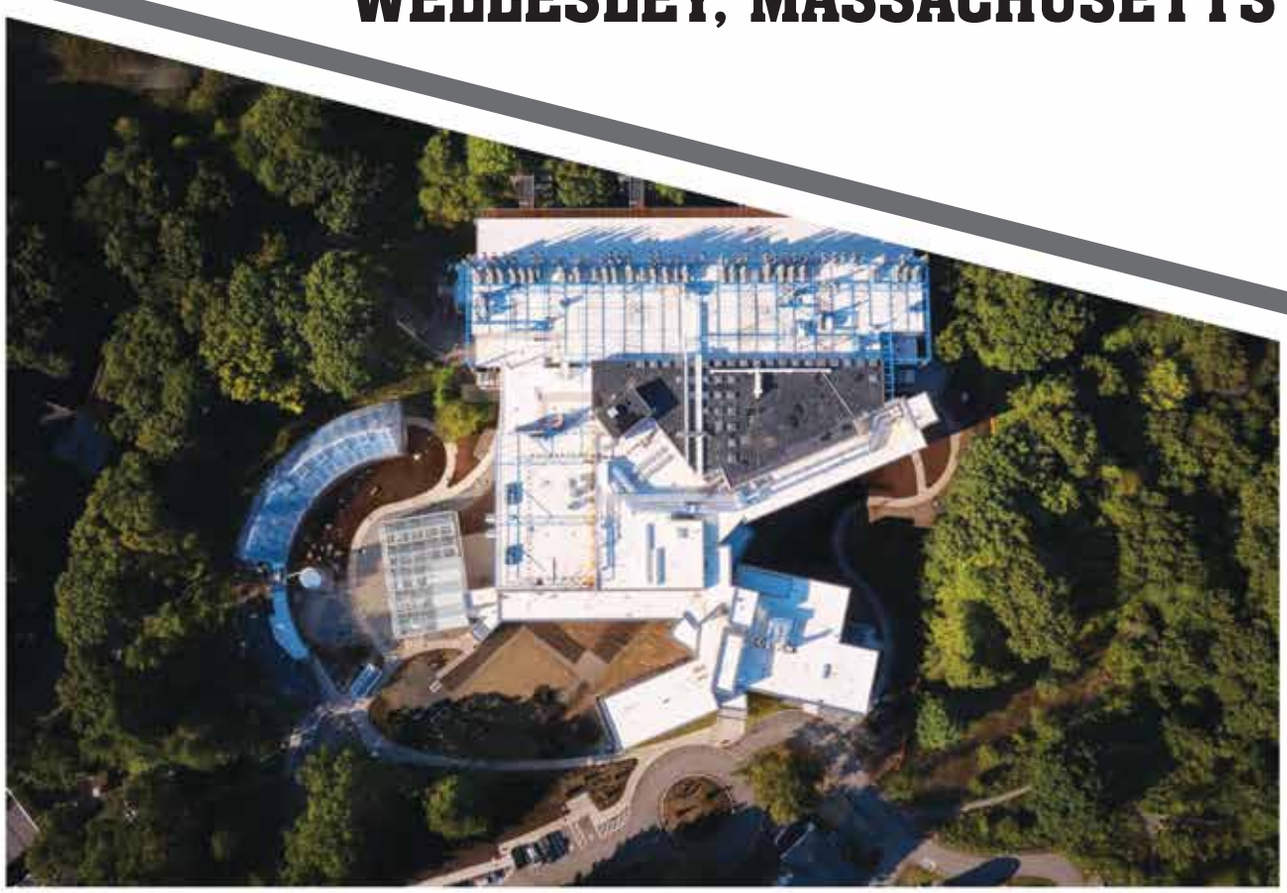
Miller Hull Partnership is a nationwide architectural sustainable construction firm in the USA based in Seattle, Washington, and San Diego, California. Sustainability has been central to the company's character since its inception in 1977. Miller Hull now holds ten COTE Top Ten Awards and has completed five Living Buildings, including the Bullitt Center in Seattle. Its offices are also Living Building Petal-certified.

Miller Hull expanded their sustainability efforts in 2021 by creating EMission Zero, a campaign aimed at eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from all buildings they construct.

# 5. SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL (SOM)

## PROJECT:

## WELLESLEY COLLEGE SCIENCE COMPLEX, WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS



*After becoming a carbon-neutral company in 2022, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) has set its sights higher, aiming for all active projects to produce net zero operating carbon by 2030. The comprehensive concept of this sustainable construction firm in the USA, which is responsible for some of the world's most environmentally advanced structures, employs sustainable engineering principles to create environments that promote social well-being and environmental health.*

*This commitment to changing industrial standards can be evident in every aspect of the firm's work, from large-scale masterplans to small-scale furniture design. Urban Sequoia is among its most ambitious concepts to date. The futuristic idea combines high-rise structures with the functions of trees, creating a skyline capable of absorbing carbon at unprecedented rates.*

# 6. EHDD

## PROJECT:
## MILLIKAN LABORATORY AND ANDREW SCIENCE HALL AT POMONA COLLEGE

Since Joseph Esherick began the company in 1946, EHDD has been a leader in sustainable design, seeking to minimize the environmental impact of its work. The practice's Net Zero Energy concept was launched almost fifteen years ago, and it still advocates for a more ecologically conscious industry. This sustainable construction firm in the USA is a proponent of clean electricity and is working to reduce structure-based emissions by embracing alternatives like as mass wood and ultra-low cement concrete, as well as conducting its own research into new, cutting-edge solutions.

While this sustainable construction firm in the USA is best known for its residential and aquarium projects, it also has experience creating libraries, science centers, educational spaces, museums, and zoos. Along with its focus on sustainability, the team ensures that its initiatives encourage equity and diversity, creating environments in which users can thrive.

# 7. COOKFOX ARCHITECTS

## PROJECT:

# CITY TOWER, NEW YORK

*New York based practice COOKFOX Architecture considers itself a guardian of the world's natural resources. This sustainable construction firm in the USA's dynamic work in the urban landscape, from private houses and multi-family housing to offices and retail spaces, reimagines how spatial users interact with structures and the natural environment. Drawing on biophilic architecture, its initiatives bring humans and nature into direct contact in even the most developed cityscapes.*

*Dedicated to contextually responsive design in all its forms, the company begins each brief with extensive research into a site's cultural, historical, and locational aspects. The team works with these several layers of identity, maintaining the past while reimagining it in a contemporary, regenerative design language.*

# FAQS

### WHAT ARE THE KEY PRINCIPLES FOLLOWED BY SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN THE USA?

• **Answer:** Sustainable construction firms in the USA adhere to six core principles: environmentally friendly building materials, water conservation, waste reduction, energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and enhanced operation and maintenance methods. These concepts seek to lessen the environmental impact of buildings during their entire life cycle.

### WHAT BENEFITS DO SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN THE USA PROVIDE FOR BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS?

• **Answer:** Sustainable construction firms in the USA provide numerous benefits, including lower operational costs, regulatory compliance, and improved industry reputation. Green buildings also provide better internal settings, which leads to increased well-being and productivity among residents and employees.

### HOW DO SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN THE USA INCORPORATE TECHNOLOGY INTO THEIR PROJECTS?

• **Answer:** Sustainable building relies heavily on technology, with technologies such as Building Information Modeling (BIM) software assisting in the integration of sustainability principles into the design phase. Prefabrication also enables for the construction of components off-site, which reduces waste and improves on-site efficiency.

### WHICH SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION FIRM IN THE USA FOCUSES ON ELIMINATING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS?

• **Answer:** Miller Hull Partnership is a sustainable construction firm in the USA that established the EMission Zero campaign in 2021 with the goal of eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from all buildings it constructs. This program is consistent with their longtime commitment to sustainability, which has earned them numerous important honors.

## CONCLUSION

The sustainable building construction business prioritizes sustainable and environmentally friendly construction processes. This industry focuses on offering innovative construction materials and solutions that minimize carbon emissions, enhance energy efficiency, and prioritize environmental responsibility. These sustainable construction firms in the USA provide a diverse range of products and services, such as cement, aggregates, ready-mix concrete, insulation, roofing, and energy management systems. They want to assist customers in creating high-performing and ecologically friendly buildings by addressing the difficulties of sustainable construction, resource management, and climate change. With a strong emphasis on sustainability and efficiency, the industry is preparing for a future in which green construction practices are the standard and net-zero emissions and energy-efficient structures are prioritized.

Courtesy
• Nazanin Ghodsian
• February 18, 2025
• Case Studies, Construction Management, Sustainable Construction

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