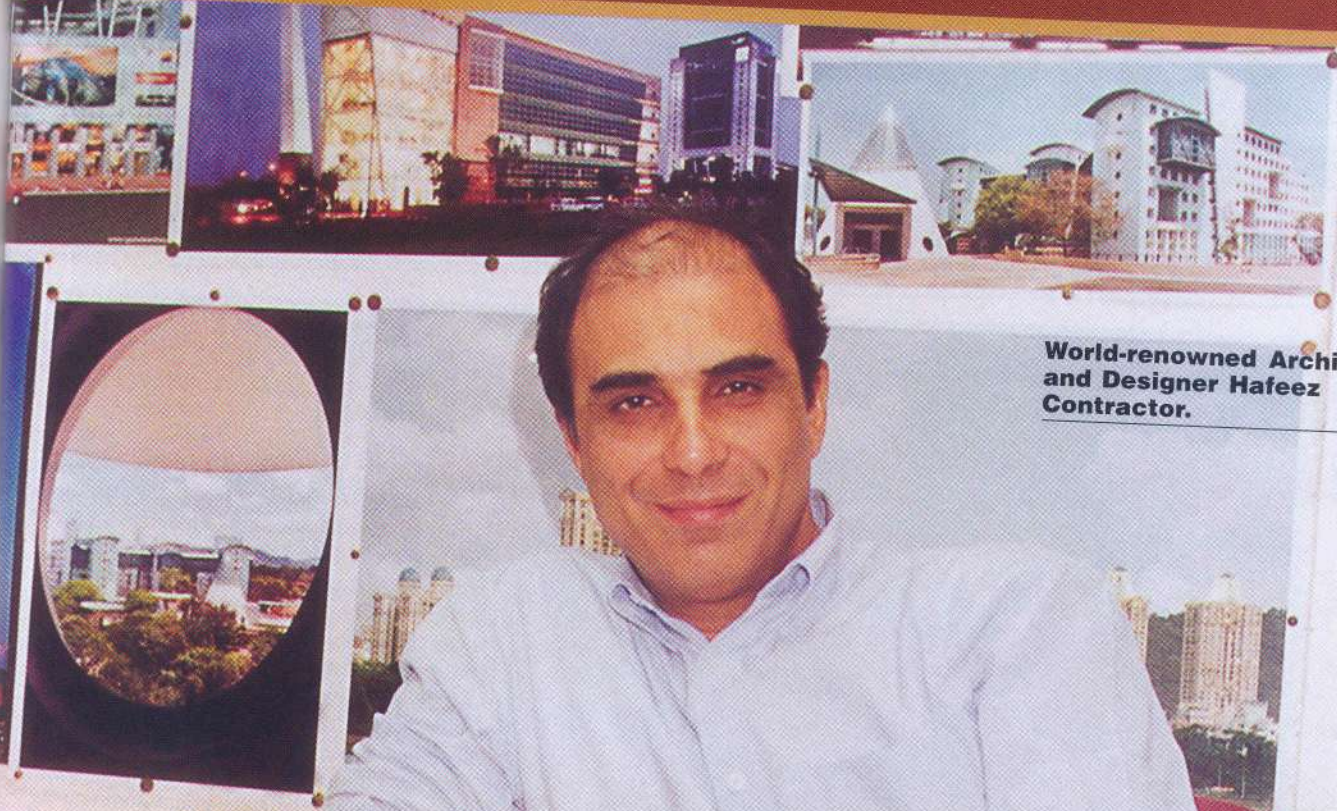


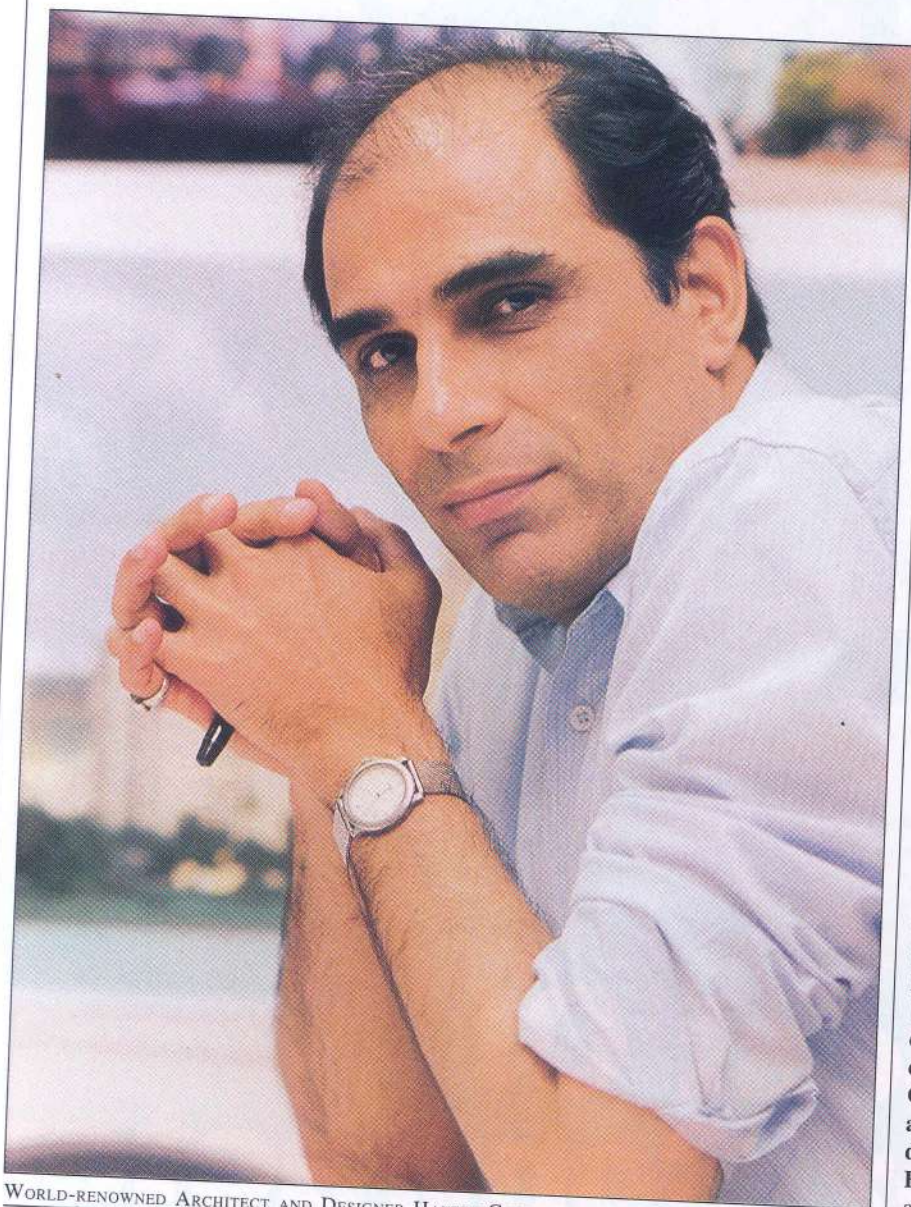
CHAIRMAN



World-renowned Architect
and Designer Hafeez
Contractor.

The Best Of Hafeez Contractor

The Best Of Hafeez Contractor



WORLD-RENOWNED ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER HAFEEZ CONTRACTOR.

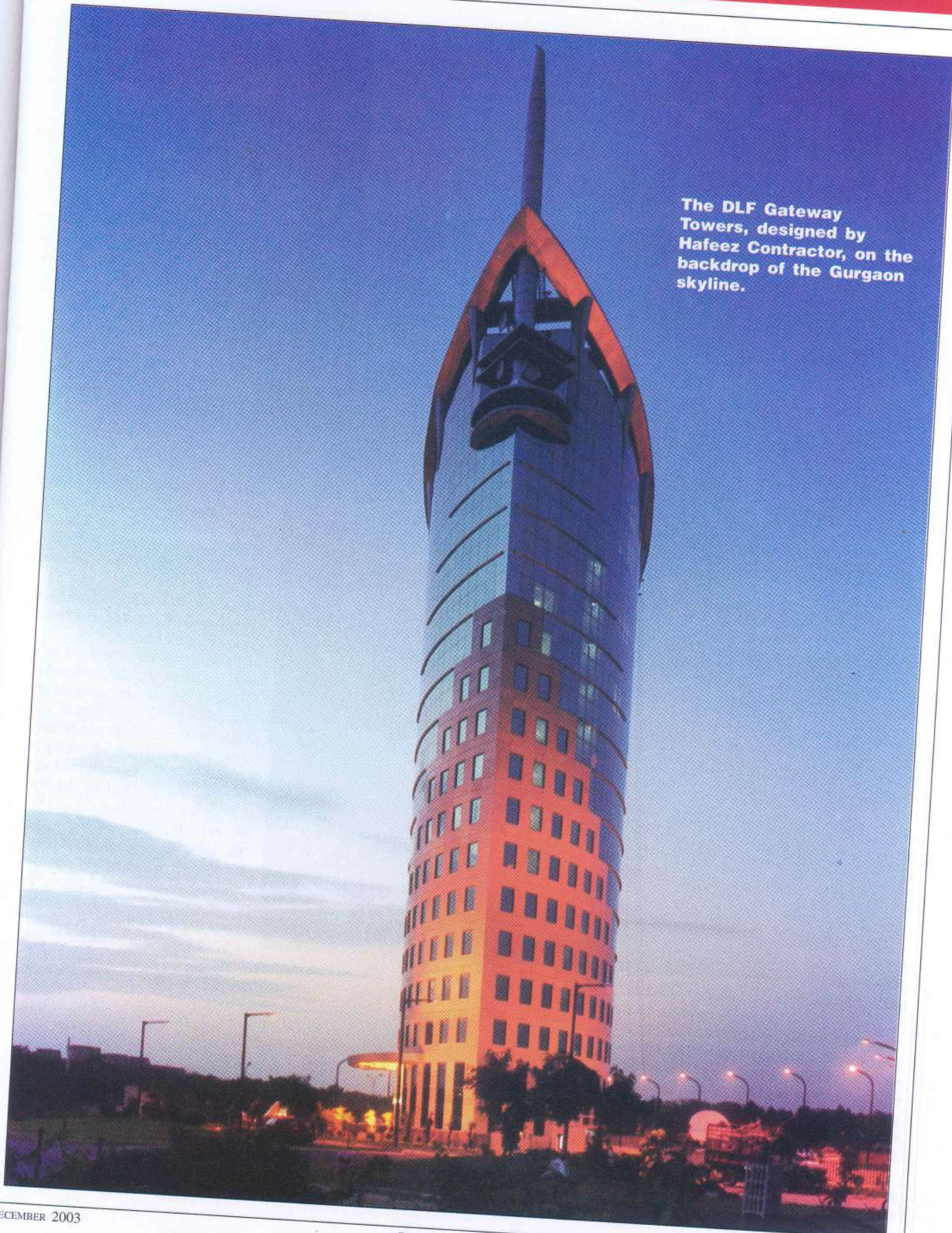
HAFEEZ CONTRACTOR IS 50 years old, but does not look a day older than forty. Fair and of medium build, the zestful Mr. Contractor, with a string of degrees attached to his name, has built a reputation for himself as India's number one architect. Highly respected in his profession and much sought-after by both corporate and residential sectors and the winner of the prestigious Priyadarshini Academy Award in 'The Field of Architecture' in 1998, Mr. Contractor has designed some of the most aesthetically pleasing buildings in the country.

A passionate believer in environment-friendly constructions, he focuses strongly on issues such as clean housing, provision of adequate water and lighting resources, smooth flow of traffic within buildings and speedy completion of projects to avoid cost overruns. He calls this 'sustainable architecture' and is one of its strongest proponents in the country.

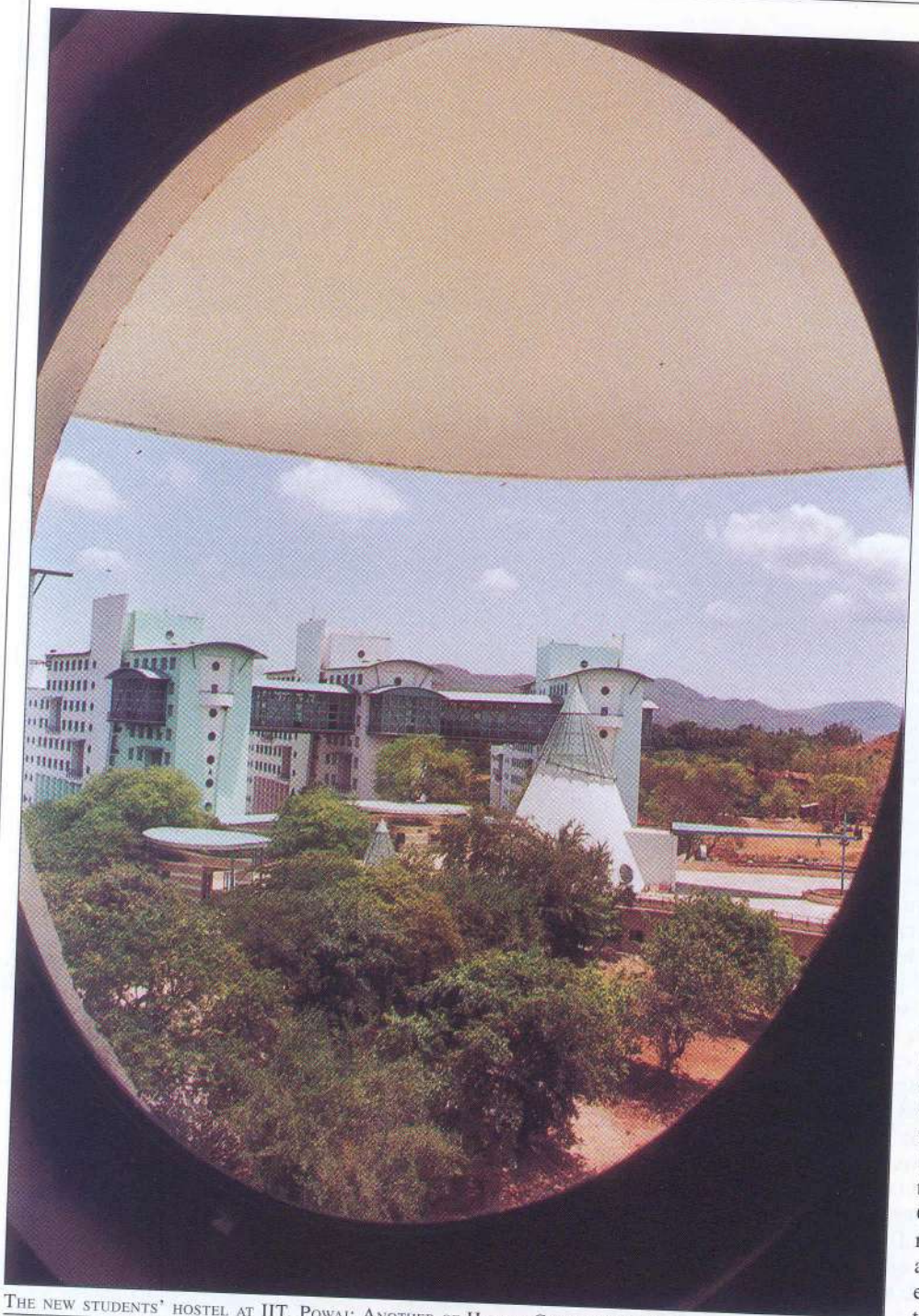
In this exclusive interview with **BUSINESS BARONS'** Principal Correspondent **JAI SHANKARA**, India's premier and world-renowned architect expresses his views on the prevailing trends in the field and the need to be global in one's thinking while designing buildings. Excerpts:

■ **Designing buildings, whether corporate or residential, have a few common themes and a few differences. Could you tell us in brief the aspects that are common and those that are different?**

HAFEEZ CONTRACTOR: I believe that architecture must mirror the way we live. To me, architecture has a life of its own



The DLF Gateway Towers, designed by Hafeez Contractor, on the backdrop of the Gurgaon skyline.



THE NEW STUDENTS' HOSTEL AT IIT, POWAI: ANOTHER OF HAFEEZ CONTRACTOR'S LANDMARK WORKS.

which we must give expression to. I try to implement this theory in all my works, whether they are corporate or residential. In my opinion, both have to be functional as well as comfortable. The basic parameters are the same for both.

The difference lies in the fact that corporate structures require a sleeker look and finish as compared to residential ones. Besides, they need to be more formal and the materials used have to be more modern,

or 'upcoming materials' as I prefer to call them. Residential structures, on the other hand, tend to be more traditional. I liken the difference to persons wearing a tuxedo and a *kurta pyjama*.

Of course, individual client preferences have to be taken into account, and this is more so in the case of residential structures. For example, in the case of a bungalow, the clientele not only tends to be restrictive in terms of numbers, but also

stimulating.

■ **What is your opinion about Mumbai?**

CONTRACTOR: In my opinion, Mumbai has missed the bus. The IT movement, which is one of the main stimulants to creativity, has clearly entrenched itself in Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad and to some extent, in Gurgaon and Noida. Pune too has a few architectural marvels, but it is the south that has fuelled creativity in the

tend to be more specific in its demands.

■ **What are the issues on which you lay special emphasis when designing corporate structures?**

CONTRACTOR: Different aspects are important to different architects, but to me there are two vital aspects on which I lay tremendous emphasis — time and the available finance. I find these two aspects the most challenging. While designing, characteristics such as functionality, looks, identity and image assume tremendous importance, but in the ultimate analysis, all of these characteristics hinge upon the twin aspects of time and money.

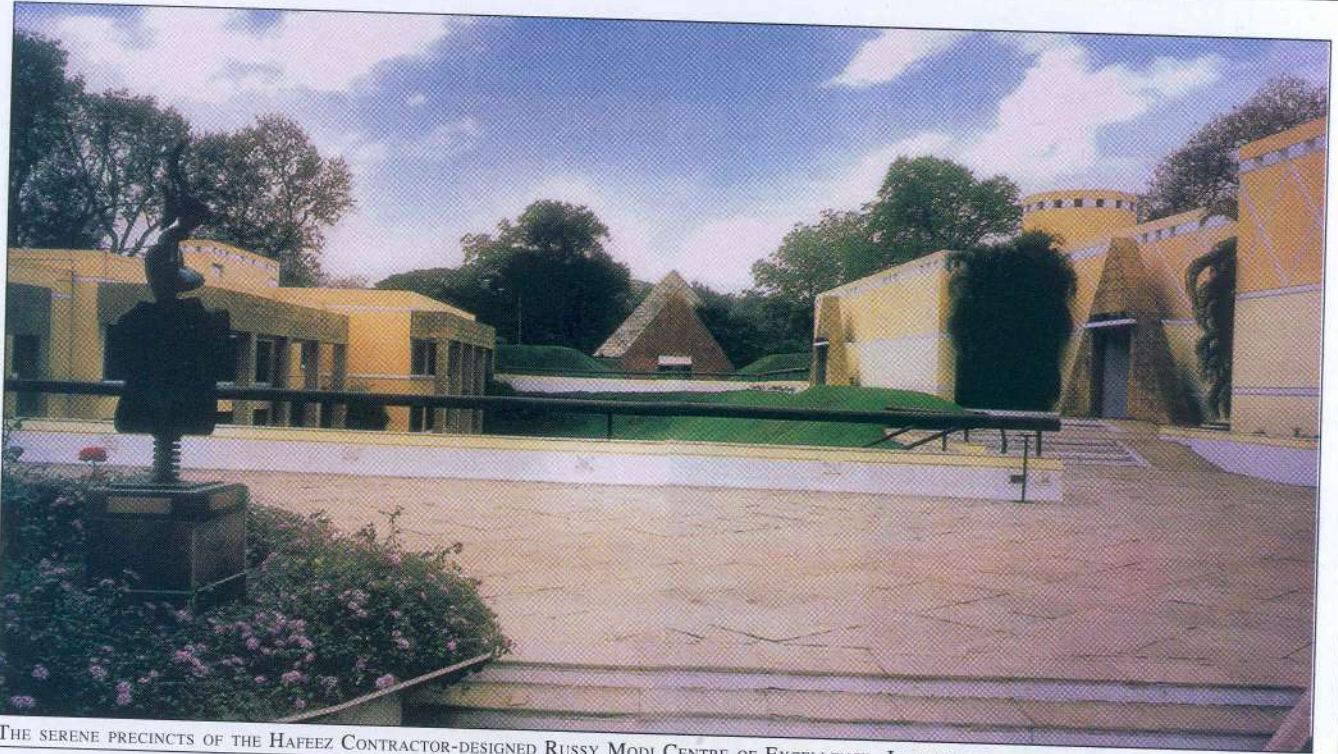
Nowadays, clients are highly demanding — they want quality products at more economical rates and in lesser time. This is a great challenge and stimulates me to deliver more creative offerings to my clients. The critical aspect now, is to give more in less time and at economical rates.

■ **Do you find Indian customers as knowledgeable as their counterparts abroad?**

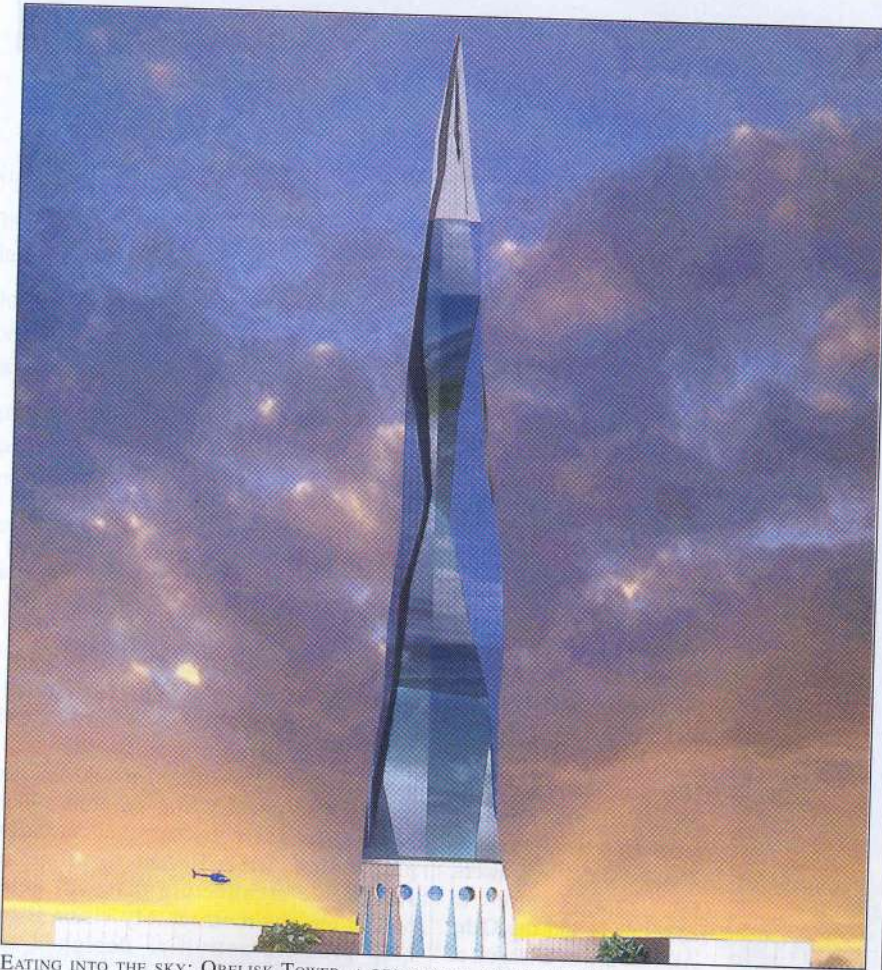
CONTRACTOR: As compared to a few years back, yes, certainly. Indian customers nowadays demand the best — they know what they want and where they can get it. This encourages creativity and is stimulating not only for my profession, but also for the marketplace.

■ **Which cities stimulate you the most?**

CONTRACTOR: I find Bangalore most stimulating — the atmosphere there really encourages creativity. So also is the case with Chennai and Hyderabad. In the north, Gurgaon and Noida near Delhi are the most



THE SERENE PRECINCTS OF THE HAFEEZ CONTRACTOR-DESIGNED RUSSY MODI CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE, JAMSHEDPUR.



EATING INTO THE SKY: OBELISK TOWER, A RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX IN HYDERABAD.

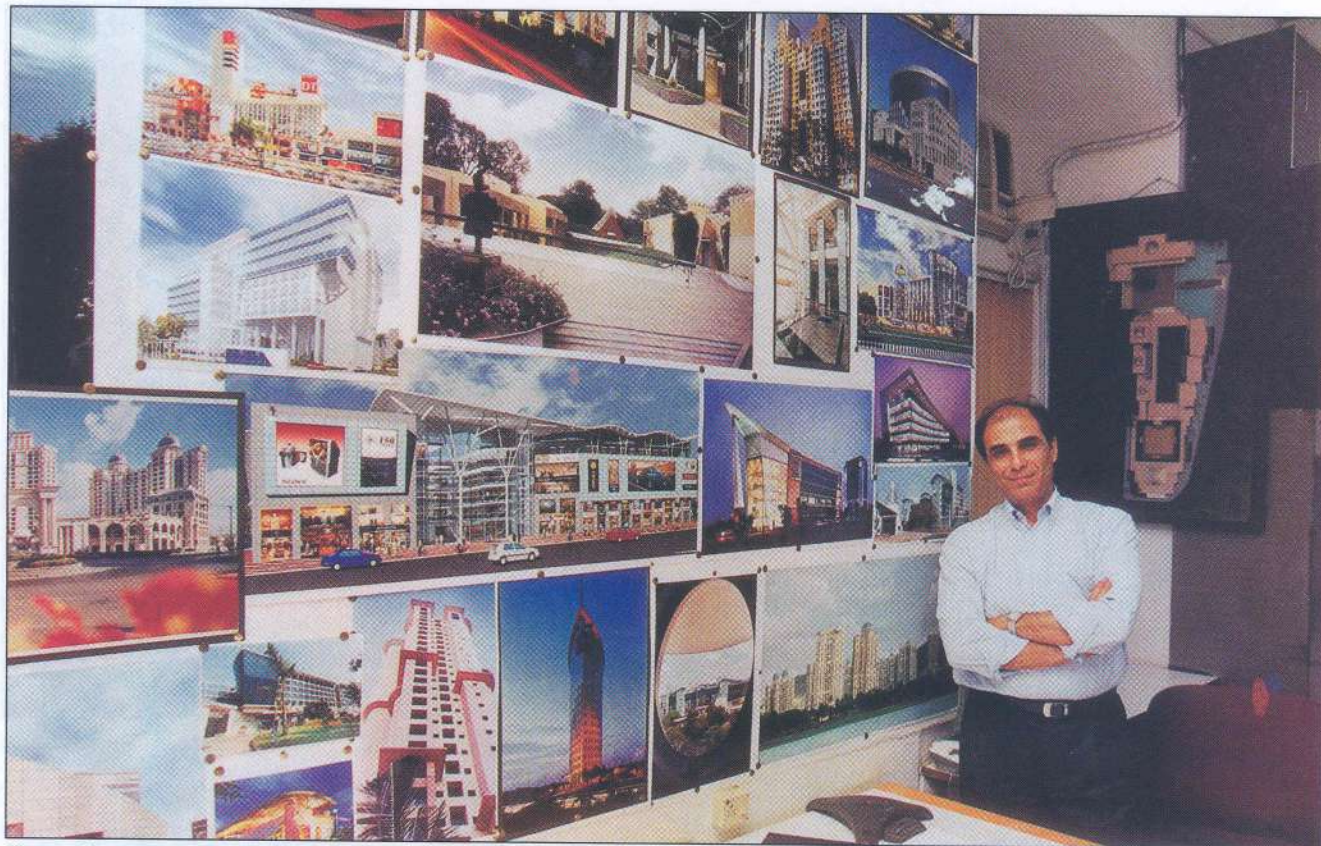
last few years.

■ **What, according to you, are the latest trends in designing corporate buildings?**

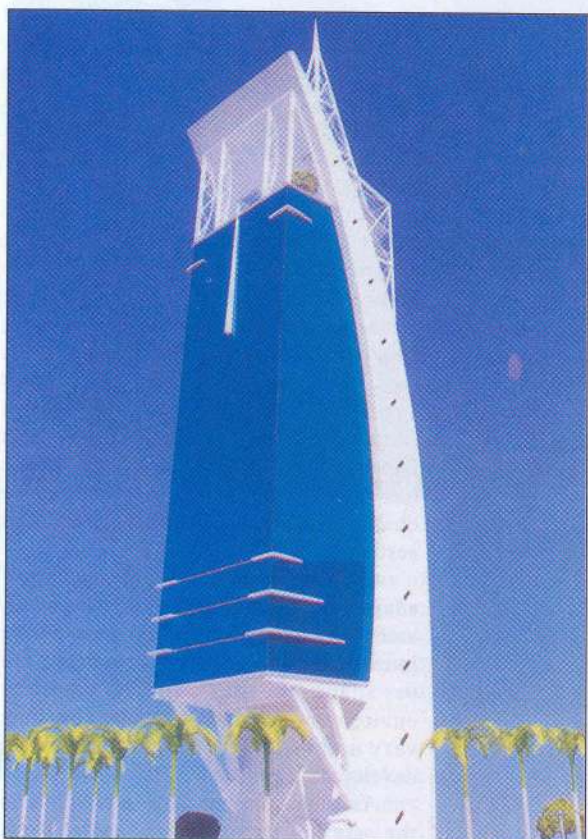
CONTRACTOR: The international trend veers towards functionality. Corporates want to look good; in India, they are increasingly moving towards an international look. People coming from abroad have to feel at home — self-comfort is being relegated to the backburner, while customer comfort is accorded prime importance. Regional architecture is fast becoming a thing of the past with global architectural styles being increasingly implemented. Increasing emphasis is also being given to ensure that the flow of traffic within the office is smooth. Besides, health and environment issues have also assumed tremendous importance nowadays. A corporate office has to be able to project the above characteristics effectively and aesthetically.

Globalisation is the theme nowadays — materials used in construction, and designs and concepts, have to be international in outlook. Architects have to adapt to the rapidly changing environment. It has therefore, become very important to keep abreast with developments abroad.

Another trend visible nowadays is the use of cutting-edge technology. With time and speed of implementation,



HAFEEZ CONTRACTOR IN HIS OFFICE, AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF PHOTOGRAPHS SHOWCASING HIS INNOVATIVE WORKS.



THE FUTURISTIC UNITED BREWERIES GROUP OFFICE BUILDING IN BANGALORE.

along with finance available, assuming critical importance, architects have to be able to deploy technology in the most effective manner. Similarly, nurturing of human resources too has assumed great importance.

However, in my opinion, the single most important phenomenon nowadays is the globalisation of architecture.

■ **Amongst the many projects you have completed so far, which ones have given you maximum satisfaction and why?**

CONTRACTOR: All projects I have undertaken, occupy a special place in my heart. However, structures like the Gateway Towers, the Tata Centre of Excellence and the Osho Ashram are in a league of their own. The IIT Hostel

in Powai, Mumbai, which I have just completed, is another project very dear to my heart. Projects which serve a special purpose or which fulfil social responsibilities give me immense satisfaction.

■ **What are some of the projects you are working on currently?**

CONTRACTOR: I am working on a large infotech park in Chennai, a knowledge park in Bangalore, a cyber city in Delhi (DLF) and some housing complexes in Navi Mumbai and the Mumbai suburbs. I am also working on some interesting projects for the Sahara group at Ambi Valley and Lucknow.

■ **Finally, what is your vision for the future?**

CONTRACTOR: I feel that what I am doing is not important; what is important is what I should be doing. I will be very happy doing more housing projects that will help transform our cities. I would like to be involved in resolving problems like housing and water shortage that currently plague our cities. I want to promote sustainable architecture that will help protect our environment. My vision is to help promote activities designed to achieve this.