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# SKY HIGH CONCEPTS

Tall buildings are changing Mumbai's skyline and raising the bar for home buyers, says Nisha Swami

Mumbai is home to the largest number of residential high-rise structures, as it is the commercial capital of India. Across the world, buildings ranging from 70 mtrs to 300 mtrs are termed as high-rises and above 300 mtrs are super high-rises. The city is undergoing a massive construction and real estate boom, with hundreds of high-rises and more than 85 skyscrapers under construction. Villas and bungalows are rapidly giving way to high-rises. For problems like the space crunch and increasing population in Mumbai city, tall buildings serve as the ultimate solution to provide homes for all.

A company spokesperson from Kalpataru Limited says, "Like they say, necessity is the mother of all in-

vention. The requirement for high-rises germinated from the attempts at managing the spatial constraints, in comparison with the growing population. High-rise projects were discovered as the most effective solution to developmental congestion, which resulted in the city getting branded to be undergoing 'vertical development'. With increasing disposable incomes and need for superior quality and luxurious properties in up-market areas like south Mumbai, it created a paradigm for buyers to realise

their aspirations of staying in prime residential and commercial hubs. These offered an unobstructed view, besides giving them a sense of achievement by owning a house in the city of dreams. While it is equally important to note that many cities in India continue to be bound by FSI restrictions, we feel it is important that this restriction be removed to enable optimum utilisation of the most scarce resource - land." Kalpataru Limited has quite a few high rises in Mumbai incidentally like Kalpataru Aura in Ghatkopar west,

Kalpataru Pinnacle, in Goregaon west, Siddhachal Elite and Kalpataru Hills, in Thane, etc. High-rise buildings occupy less ground space and as a result, the surrounding land is available for the creation of essential infra-structural facilities by utilising the FSI premium generated by these tall structures. Rajendra Verma, director, Omkar Realtors and Developers Pvt Ltd. gives an insight into the details of approvals and design challenges for a high-rise structure. He says, "One of the

istry of environment and forests."

Omkar Realtors and Developers Pvt. Ltd., too have three high-rise projects in Mumbai; Alta Monte in Malad east, comprising four towers of 42-62 storeys, a super luxury project at Worli with three towers from 60-80 storeys and a project which is a JV with L & T Realty in Parel, consisting of six towers of 40-60 storeys.

Tall buildings have a 'status symbol' tag attached to them. People residing in these buildings are assumed to belong to the urban rich class or SECA group. These buildings also allow for designing each floor sepa-



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rately, thus providing more room for creativity. The magnificent view from these high-rises is a factor which buyers keep in mind before zeroing in on the flat. By staying on the top floors, they can be far-off from all the traffic and pollution. Amit Thacker, head - SD Corporation Pvt. Ltd., avers, "In a city like Mumbai, the limited availability of land is one of the most crucial reasons for the need of high-rise apartments. Being the financial capital, linkages to the city centre are the key drivers to the demand of apartments within the city limits. Adding to this are the higher FSI norms and the new requirement of open spaces by the MoEF, which increases the urgency of this need in Mumbai."

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He further adds, "Constructing a high-rise tower (which means a 40-storey or higher tower), has its own set of challenges varying from permissions to engineering and construction challenges. To begin with, we need to conduct feasibility studies, including geo-technical studies of the location, study the possible width-to-height ratios and study the possible foundation designs to decide on the scale and structure of the construction. Additional permissions are required for constructing high-rises, which include the high-rise approval and MoEF approval, in addition to various other approvals required for construction. Engineering is a challenge in it-



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self with the requirement of steel structuring, high quality of plant and machinery, and specialised labour required to develop the high-rise. There are construction challenges too like vertical movement of equipment including water, concrete, etc., safety of labour at these heights, etc., which need to be addressed."

The simple strategy with tall buildings is to take maximum advantage of the benefits while addressing the concerns. For instance, they can be considered as landmarks for directions to a certain place or area. They can easily be located and stand out because of their towering height.

Several developers believe that as Mumbai is an island city, there is no more room for horizontal structures. In order to accommodate more people, going vertical is the right solution. Verma opines, "The future is going to be high-rises especially in Mumbai, in line with the concept of vertical cities being developed across the world." Thacker concludes, "In the coming years and with continued shortage of land, we will definitely see the trend of high-rises increase in Mumbai and over a period of time, this ought to radically change the skyline of the city."