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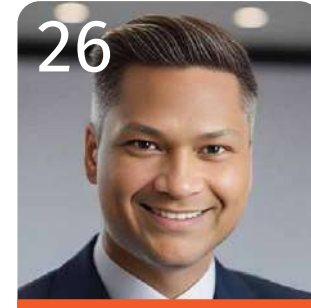
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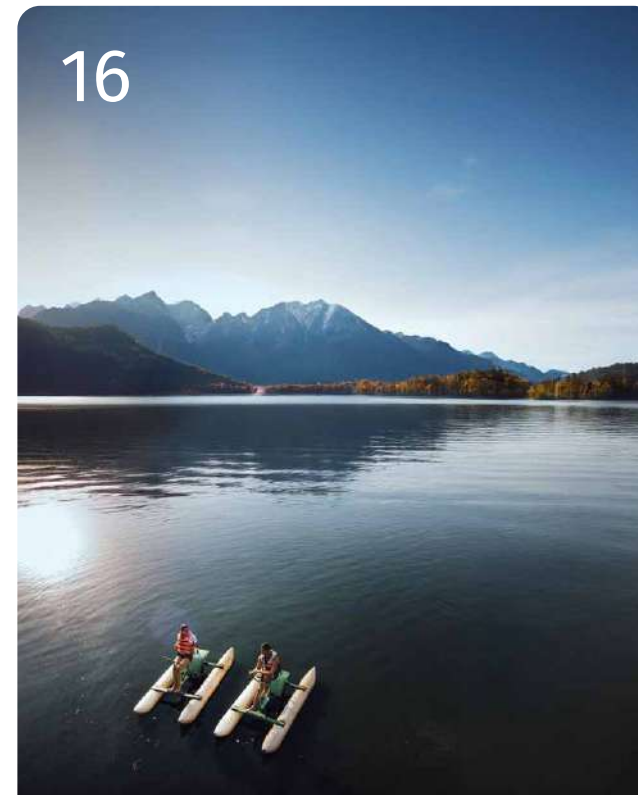
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# From the EDITOR

Dear Readers,

With 2024 drawing to a close, we are excited to present a special Asia Pacific edition of Business Frontier. This edition delves into the key trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping the Asia-Pacific region, offering exclusive insights from influential leaders across various industries.

Our cover story features the multi-faceted Fragaria Alfissima, Managing Director of PT Calipena Sinambung Daya, who provides a deep dive into the rapidly evolving clean and renewable energy sectors, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities that drive innovation in the transition toward a greener, more sustainable future.

In addition, we are pleased to feature interviews with prominent leaders, including Rusmin Lawin, Global Ambassador of Real Estate Indonesia; Dilip Prasad, Co-Founder & CEO of Ayun AI; Enrique Antonio Reyes, Vice President & People Growth and Productivity Champion at Converge ICT Solutions; and John Liu, CEO of jumpAD. These industry veterans share their unique leadership journeys, strategies for success, and insights into leading AI-driven companies. They also reflect on the key lessons they've learned throughout their careers and the evolving dynamics of their respective sectors.

Along with these inspiring profiles, this edition offers a comprehensive look at the diverse industries and leaders driving economic growth across the APAC region. The content is designed to empower business leaders and entrepreneurs to navigate and thrive in this fast-evolving world.

Looking ahead to 2025, we remain dedicated to providing the insights and strategies that will help you succeed in the year to come. Thank you for being a part of Business Frontier.

Until then,  
*Happy Reading!*



**Deepa Natarajan Lobo**  
Assistant Editor,  
Business Frontier

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# A Symbiotic Relationship with Infrastructure Development



**Rusmin Lawin, Global Ambassador of Real Estate Indonesia,** speaks to **Business Frontier** on the emerging realty sector of Asia Pacific



**R**usmin Lawin, Global Ambassador of Real Estate Indonesia since 2008, straddles the property market like a colossus.

With stellar achievements, he acts as the conduit linking the investment ecosystems of Asia-Pacific and the Middle East. Rusmin has not only led from the front, catalysing the development of the country and the region with his initiatives, he also serves as a role model to the younger generation of leaders.

He is the recipient of Asia Pacific Real Estate Leader at CEO BURJ AWARD 2022 in Dubai and serves as Chairman of the Regional Developments Committee at Indonesia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), Vice President of Real Estate Indonesia Developers Association, and a Board Member of Indonesia Hong Kong Business Association.

Of the many hats he wears, Rusmin occupies major positions in FIABCI, including President of FIABCI Asia Pacific and FIABCI Representative to the United Nations Geneva. In an interview with **Business Frontier**, Rusmin digs into the realty sector of Asia Pacific, providing a fresh perspective of its role in economic growth and its symbiotic relationship with infrastructure development.

## What are the initiatives you have taken as the president of FIABCI?

As the president of FIABCI, I oversee the Asia-Pacific region, which includes a set of 18 countries with diverse social, economic and cultural settings. Working to provide an enabling environment for innovation and research, we are focused on seeing the development of real estate with an emphasis on Asia where we have witnessed remarkable growth. In an attempt to foster global outreach, I have criss-crossed the globe to promote projects such as Nusantara New Capital City, one of the biggest infrastructure projects (\$33billion).

The project will act as a new economic hub in the ASEAN region and lead the eastern region of ASEAN under BIMP EAGA (Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area, a sub-cooperation programme of the southeast Asian bloc. The subregion is spread over a land area of 1.6 million square

kilometres, with about 73 million inhabitants. In addition, the liberalisation of foreign investment in the property sector, according to which one can make a purchase under one's name using a passport, will go a long way in making Indonesia a global property hub. These are the initiatives that have contributed to the consolidation of the property investment market in the region.

## Which leadership principles provide you with a leverage to function efficiently in the real estate sector?

My leadership principles are enshrined in the belief that real estate acts as a significant asset, especially for those looking to scale the socioeconomic curve. I am a strong supporter of the idea that being a property owner is the key to economic success even when digital innovations are hogging the limelight. My objective, as a leader in the real estate sector, is to send the message— especially to those in the developing world—that ownership of property wields immense economic clout.

## The property market is on a sharp growth trajectory in Indonesia. What are the reasons behind this expansion? Do you think the nation's infrastructure development has fuelled real estate growth?

Several reasons are behind the growth of the property market in Indonesia, making it an investor's paradise. First, population data of the nation project a fast-expanding demand for housing. Second, Indonesia —one of the most populous countries in the world — has stepped up investment in infrastructure such as toll roads and the recently developed Bullet Train. The development in infrastructure has a multiplier effect on the property market, boosting growth and driving prices.

In addition, Indonesia has a huge housing backlog of around 11.6 million units, with the shortage amounting to about 400,000 units per annum. The yawning gap makes the property market ripe for investors eyeing significant gains.



## What are the long-term goals in conjunction with which you are leading the organisation?

A primary goal of our organisation is to reduce the housing backlog by developing affordable but quality housing, especially for workers. For promoting industries, we aim to use the advantages provided by Indonesia such as a huge market, abundant natural resources, and developed infrastructure to draw investment — both domestic and international. Being the leader, my commitment lies in keeping growth by providing an enabling environment that is conducive to promoting investment and sustainable economic growth.

## You have a wealth of industry experience. Drawing on the quality and length of this experience, how will you advise the leaders of tomorrow?

In today's world given to nanosecond attention spans, focus and determination seem to come at a premium. These days, it is common for young professionals to change jobs frequently for immediate financial reward. I will advise them to find their niche in the business and acquire domain expertise with the help of continuous learning and development.

# Marrying Artificial Intelligence to Sustainability



**Dilip Prasad, Co-Founder & CEO, Ayun AI, speaks to Business Frontier about his professional journey, leadership strategies, secret of success and much more**

**D**ilip Prasad, Co-Founder & CEO, Ayun AI, embodies the right fusion of innovative skills and academic achievements to expand the frontiers of creativity. His achievements in exploring the intersections of artificial intelligence, life sciences, physics and environmental sciences are just a few of the pursuits that crown him with leadership skills to provide exemplary leadership at Ayun AI.

In an interview with **Business Frontier**, Dilip Prasad discusses the upcoming field of AI and how he marries it to sustainability.

## What qualities do you think have propelled you to the forefront of success?

My success is rooted in a blend of robust academic achievements, innovative entrepreneurship, and impactful mentorship. My contributions to scalable and sustainable artificial intelligence have led to multiple patents. As a founder of multiple startups, I have shown leadership and an entrepreneurial spirit. Collaborative engagements in academia and industry have expanded my influence and facilitated continuous innovation. Notable awards,

including the Rolls-Royce Inventor Award, and being consistently listed in Stanford's top 2% of scientists validate the high impact and credibility of my work.

## From being a professor at The Arctic University of Norway to a visiting faculty member at the National University of Singapore, you straddle the world of research and academics. What do you think lies behind your academic success?

energy consumption associated with AI development and usage.

## There seem to be few organisations which integrate sustainability in AI. How does Ayun marry the two concepts?

At Ayun AI, we are dedicated to marrying sustainability with artificial intelligence by developing energy-efficient AI solutions for vision, multimodal and NLP AI models. We focus on model compression techniques that significantly reduce energy consumption and lower carbon footprints, making all types of AI including large language models (LLM) more sustainable and environment- friendly.

## AI is buzzing in the business firmament today even more than the dot-com boom two decades ago. What do you think are the challenges AI faces at the global level?

Despite creating a buzz akin to the dot-com boom, AI faces significant global challenges. One major issue is ensuring AI systems are ethical and free from biases. Without careful design and diverse training datasets, AI can perpetuate existing biases. Another challenge is the development of uniform regulatory frameworks across countries, each with its own priorities and legal standards. This makes it difficult to establish a coherent set of global rules governing AI's development and deployment. Additionally, there's a notable talent shortage in the AI field. Data privacy and security are also major concerns. Furthermore, the disparity in AI adoption between developed and developing nations could exacerbate existing economic and social divides. Moreover, the significant computational power required for AI raises environmental concerns.

## What is your advice to young entrepreneurs launching AI start-ups?

Launching an AI startup is an exhilarating yet challenging journey. Start by identifying a clear, real-world problem that your AI can solve, ensuring your solution is deeply rooted in actual needs and pain points. Remember "Webapp is not a startup". If entry barrier is too low for your domain,



**“Despite creating a buzz akin to the dot-com boom, AI faces significant global challenges. One major issue is ensuring AI systems are ethical and free from biases. ”**

then one cannot maintain an edge for very long. Assemble a diverse team to enhance the effectiveness of your AI and help avoid biases in your models. Focus on collecting, cleaning, and ethically sourcing high-quality data. Forge partnerships with academic institutions and industry leaders to access essential resources and insights that can accelerate your development. Understand the regulatory landscape in your target markets to ensure compliance and build trust. Secure sufficient funding, as AI development is resource intensive. Finally, design your infrastructure for scalability from the start to accommodate rapid growth and demand.

## What do you do when not teaching, mentoring or leading?

At leisure, I indulge my curiosity by continuously learning new and diverse things. Due to time constraints, I often listen to summaries of two to three books every day on various topics to satiate my thirst for knowledge without committing to lengthy reads. I am also an avid outdoor sports enthusiast with a particular passion for water sports. Activities like kayaking, sailing, and surfing provide a great way to unwind and maintain my fitness.





**Fragaria Alfissima, Managing Director of PT Calipena Sinambung Daya, speaks to Business Frontier about the trends and needs of clean and renewable energy sectors**

# ‘Effective Leadership is About Leading by Example’

A prominent figure in the clean and renewable energy sectors, **Fragaria Alfissima, Managing Director of PT Calipena Sinambung Daya**, has built a distinguished career centred around advancing sustainable energy solutions. With a deep commitment to environmental stewardship, Fragaria has played a key role in driving forward Indonesia’s clean energy transition. His professional journey is marked by a proven track record of leadership and innovation in the renewables industry, where he has been a champion of energy sustainability and has spearheaded numerous projects aimed at reducing the country’s carbon footprint.

Under his leadership, Calipena Sinambung Daya has emerged as a major player in the clean and renewable energy field, focusing on the development of solar, hydropower, and alternative fuel projects. Fragaria is known for his ability to identify emerging trends and integrate cutting-edge technologies, positioning the company at the forefront of the green energy revolution.

In addition to his role at Calipena Sinambung Daya, Fragaria is deeply involved in the broader renewable energy community. He serves as a key member of the Bandung Hydro Association, where he contributes his expertise to help shape policies and initiatives that support the growth of sustainable energy. His work in the hydropower sector, combined with his passion for scaling clean energy solutions, has earned him recognition as a thought leader in the industry.

As an advocate for green energy innovation, Fragaria is committed to fostering the development of energy solutions that are both environmentally responsible and economically viable. His leadership is rooted in a belief that renewable energy not only has the potential to combat climate change but also to drive long-term economic growth and job creation.

In an exclusive interview with **Business Frontier**, Fragaria speaks passionately about why now is the most exciting time to be in the energy industry. He highlights the unprecedented opportunities for technological advancements, collaboration, and policy support that are reshaping

the global energy landscape. With his wealth of experience and forward-thinking approach, Fragaria offers valuable insights into the future of sustainable energy and its transformative impact on both local and global scales.

## Can you tell us a little about your early experiences? Did you always want to enter the energy industry?

Yes, from a young age, I always wanted to be an engineer. I was curious about how things worked and what I could do to be involved in that. Engineering felt like the right fit for me. I studied at the Institute Technology of Bandung, majoring in Aeronautical Engineering in 1991. One memory that stands out is my fascination with flight—seeing something fly sparked my desire to understand engineering better.

After graduating, I found myself working in the energy sector, where I got the opportunity to implement the theories I learned about energy conversion and thermodynamics. My passion for clean energy developed during my college years. I realised that energy is fundamental to everything, but how we produce and use it significantly impacts our environment.

## How did those experiences influence your leadership style today?

My journey in engineering instilled a strong sense of responsibility and curiosity, both of which have profoundly shaped my leadership style. Early on, I learned the importance of understanding complex systems and the interdependencies within them. This knowledge has been invaluable in my role as a leader in the energy sector, where decisions often impact multiple stakeholders.

I believe that effective leadership is about leading by example; demonstrating commitment and integrity encourages my team to adopt similar values. Moreover, my technical background allows me to engage deeply with my team’s projects, helping them navigate challenges with confidence. I encourage open communication and collaboration, fostering an environment where team members feel empowered to share ideas and innovate. My experiences

have taught me that a leader’s behaviour is contagious; if I exhibit dedication and a strong work ethic, my team is more likely to emulate those qualities, which enhances our overall performance and cohesion.

## What is your strategy for delivering effective solutions to clients?

Understanding the problem is key. I invest time in learning about the project and its challenges before presenting solutions to clients. If the issue exceeds my knowledge, I involve team members with expertise in that area to ensure we provide accurate and credible solutions. I also prioritize open communication with clients, encouraging their feedback to refine our approach. This collaborative process not only enhances the solutions we deliver but also strengthens our relationship with clients. By fostering trust and demonstrating our commitment to their needs, I aim to create effective, long-term partnerships that drive mutual success.

## How do you manage daily operations while keeping an eye on long-term goals?

Balancing daily operations with long-term goals is a critical aspect of effective leadership in the energy sector. To achieve this, I focus on establishing a clear vision for the future of our organisation. I establish objectives and communicate them to my team, outlining where we want to be in five or ten years. This helps us stay aligned and focused on our goals.

I also communicate this vision effectively, ensuring that everyone is aligned with our long-term goals. Setting intermediary targets helps break down the larger vision into manageable milestones. Regular check-ins and performance reviews are also essential for assessing our advancement. I encourage feedback from my team to identify areas for improvement and celebrate achievements along the way. By fostering a culture of accountability and transparency, we can remain agile and responsive to changes while still keeping our eyes on the horizon, ensuring that daily operations support our strategic ambitions.



hydrogen energy are transforming how we approach energy production and consumption.

Additionally, there's a growing awareness and demand from consumers for cleaner energy solutions, which is driving both policy changes and corporate strategies. This awareness is coupled with significant investment in research and development aimed at addressing climate change and reducing our carbon footprint. Being part of this transformative phase inspires me, as I believe we have the potential to redefine how we think about energy. My passion lies in exploring these new frontiers and collaborating with my team to create solutions that can lead us toward a more sustainable future.

### What trends do you foresee shaping the future of the energy industry?

Two significant trends are poised to reshape the future of the energy industry: increased environmental awareness and the depletion of fossil fuels. As the global population becomes more conscious of climate change and its impacts, there is a growing demand for cleaner energy solutions. This awareness is not just limited to consumers; policymakers and businesses are increasingly prioritizing sustainability in their strategies.

Due to the finite nature of fossil fuels, we are witnessing a surge in investments in clean and renewable energy technologies, such as hydro, solar, and wind. Hydrogen as an alternative fuel is starting to be eyed for commercial implementation. This duality—awareness of sustainability and the scarcity of fossil fuels—will drive innovation and transformation across the energy sector, prompting a shift toward more sustainable practices and technologies that can meet future energy demands while minimizing environmental impact.

### What excites you the most about the energy industry today?

The current landscape of the energy industry is incredibly dynamic and offers a wealth of opportunities for innovation, particularly in the realm of clean and sustainable energy. One of the most exciting aspects is the rapid advancement in technologies that enable us to harness renewable resources more efficiently. For instance, developments in solar, wind, and

### What do you think is the current need in the energy industry?

There's a critical need for balance in the energy industry, especially as we develop new technologies. As we transition towards more renewable energy sources, there is an urgent need to develop infrastructure that can support this shift. The challenge lies in ensuring that energy systems can reliably integrate renewable energy with existing networks, all while maintaining financial sustainability.

We need to integrate clean energy solutions with other sectors, like construction and transportation, while also considering financial sustainability. This requires collaboration and innovation across various fields and includes everything from new energy generation facilities to updated grid systems capable of handling diverse energy inputs.

Furthermore, balancing energy production with environmental considerations is paramount. We must be mindful of how energy projects impact local communities and ecosystems. Financial planning also plays a critical role; funding is essential to drive these initiatives forward. Stakeholders must work collaboratively, sharing knowledge across sectors such as construction, finance, and policy-making to create holistic solutions.

### What advice would you give to beginners entering the energy field?

Entering the energy industry can be incredibly rewarding, but it requires hard work and dedication. My advice

is to cultivate a strong work ethic and a genuine passion for the field. Understand that success often doesn't come overnight; it requires perseverance and commitment to continuous learning. Embrace challenges as opportunities for growth, and don't shy away from seeking help or mentorship from experienced professionals. Staying humble is equally important; maintain an openness to feedback and be willing to adapt.

Building credibility takes time, and it's essential to demonstrate reliability and competence in your work. Networking is also key in this industry. Engage with peers, attend conferences, and participate in relevant workshops to broaden your understanding and create valuable connections. Finally, remain curious and proactive about emerging technologies and trends in the energy sector. As Steve Jobs rightly said, 'Stay hungry, Stay foolish'. This industry is rapidly evolving, and those who stay informed and adaptable will be best positioned for success.

### What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I have a deep passion for reading and find that books offer a way to explore new ideas, cultures, and perspectives, enriching my understanding of the world. It allows me to step into other worlds and challenge my own thinking, often inspiring new ways of viewing the world around me.

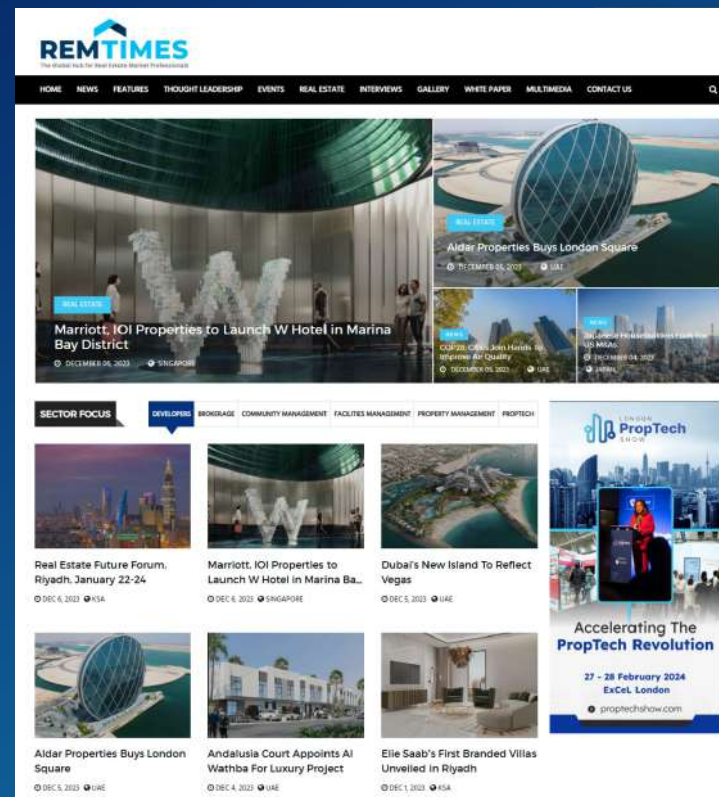
Additionally, I enjoy playing badminton, a popular sport in my country. It provides a fantastic way to stay active and unwind after a busy day. It's more than just a way to stay active—it's a chance to clear my mind and engage in friendly competition. It also offers an excellent way to unwind after a busy day and is a great outlet for releasing stress.

Cooking is another activity I cherish, particularly preparing traditional dishes like Indonesian fried rice, which allows me to connect with my cultural roots and share meals with family.

Family time is essential to me, and I often take opportunities to explore new places or engage in activities together. Although I tend to be more introverted, I appreciate moments of connection with loved ones. Balancing work with these hobbies not only enhances my well-being but also refreshes my mind, allowing me to return to my professional responsibilities with renewed energy and creativity.

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# Always Prepared to Welcome Change

*Noel Krisnandar Yahja, CFO, SGMW Multifinance Indonesia, talks about his strategy of coping with a changing business environment and how he keeps his team primed for the future*



**N**oel Krisnandar Yahja, CFO, SGMW Multifinance Indonesia has carved a niche for himself in the complex world of finance. In his current role, the dynamic leader works to reduce financial risks by developing effective risk management strategies and regulating cash flow. In an attempt to keep up with the changing regulatory environment, such as tax laws, accounting standards, and technological advancements, Yahja also spends time in learning and implementing what he has learnt in the service of organisational growth. In an interview with **Business Frontier**, Yahja talks about his strategies of coping in a changing business environment and how he keeps his team steer ahead of their contemporaries.

**What are your primary responsibilities at SGMW Multifinance Indonesia?**

I am part of the board of directors of the company that is focused on Finance and Risk Management. I handle finance-related functions including accounting, budgeting, taxation, reporting, finance operations and treasury functions. In addition, I cover the full scope of Risk Management within the company. I am actively involved and take the lead in many new projects to enhance company growth, based on agreement among the Board of Directors.

**As a CFO, what strategies do you use to develop talent within your team?**

As one of the founders of the company, I understand the importance of building a team that works hand in hand to give the best to the company. To make a strong team, we need to

keep undergoing changes and have the same short-term and long-term goals.

Along the way, I also keep my eyes on any possibility of role rotation to match an individual's specific skills and knowledge. I spend a lot of time reviewing the process of getting results and award the deserving team.

I also make sure that underperformers are given extra training and that their team spirit and keenness to achieve goals is not affected. I am directly and indirectly involved in the execution of these processes with the goal to increase inclusiveness, development of team members and growth of stronger bonds within my team.

“

*I believe that it is the success of the team that is responsible for my success and in turn, the success of the organisation. Hence, I work towards creating a positive and collaborative environment that leads to growth and development.*

”

I believe that it is the success of the team that is responsible for my success and in turn, the success of the organisation. Hence, I work towards creating a positive and collaborative environment that leads to growth and development. This approach helps create a sense of community and belonging in the team, boost morale and lead to increased productivity. I also like to grow with my team and believe that investing in their growth and development will benefit the organisation on the whole.

**What are the most exciting and challenging aspects of your job?**

Being the founder of the company and an intrinsic part of its extensive growth inspires

me to keep thinking of new ideas and their immediate implementation. The positive environment at work helps in the evolution of my skills that involve direct involvement at all levels of the company. This, in turn, leads to a sense of fulfillment and inspires me to continuously bring about changes.

**What principles have helped you stay ahead of the curve?**

I believe that the only thing that remains constant in life is change and that helps keep my spirits up personally and professionally.

**What legacy do you hope to leave in your current role?**

I maintain momentum in pursuing ongoing growth amidst shifting environments and evolving business demands. As a professional, I foster a team culture that actively strategizes new initiatives to ensure the company's sustainability.

I always ensure that my entire team is ready to improve as I strongly believe that this would improve the quality of my team and make it stay abreast with the changing trends of the industry.

**Looking ahead, what changes or trends do you anticipate in your field?**

I keep updating myself continuously with the immediate change in the business environment and am ready to face any changes. This includes gathering updated information, improving technical skills and developing strategies to compete in a changing business environment.



# KEY TRENDS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ADVENTURE TOURISM

**Tariq Sheriff, Director, Area 83**, an adventure sports resort in Bengaluru, gives an insight into the factors leading to the growth of adventure tourism sector in India



In India, the tourism industry is experiencing a boom, with adventure tourism leading the charge. As more individuals seek out thrilling travel experiences, adventure tourism is taking center stage. The future of adventure tourism looks promising, with several emerging trends driving its growing popularity. Notable shifts in the adventure tourism sector are largely influenced by the changing preferences of travellers, particularly millennials and Gen Zs.

Here are some trends that will shape the adventure tourism industry in India:

**Sustainable Adventures:** One of the most prominent trends in adventure tourism is the growing emphasis on sustainability. Modern travellers are increasingly mindful of their environmental footprint and are actively seeking experiences that align with their eco-conscious values. From staying in eco-lodges situated amidst pristine landscapes to participating in wildlife conservation efforts, sustainable adventure tourism is on the rise. Travellers are opting for activities that leave minimal impact on the environment, embracing the ethos of responsible travel and conservation.

**Luxury Meets Adventure:** In a world where comfort and adventure meet, luxury adventure tourism has emerged as a compelling trend. Today's travellers crave not only heart-pounding experiences but also the indulgence of high-end amenities and services. From deluxe accommodations in breathtaking locales to curated experiences that combine adventure with lavishness, luxury adventure travel offers those who appreciate the best of both worlds. It's an exploration of exhilaration without compromise, where every moment is infused with refined style.

**Off-the-Beaten-Path Discoveries:** The attraction of off-the-beaten-path destinations continues to captivate adventurers seeking authenticity and solitude. Away from the tourist crowds, these hidden gems offer a glimpse into untouched landscapes and vibrant cultures. Travellers are venturing beyond traditional tourist hotspots, exploring remote corners of the globe, and embarking on journeys that promise exclusive experiences. Whether it's trekking through remote wilderness or immersing in the traditions of lesser-known communities, the appeal of off-the-grid adventures is undeniable.

**Wellness Adventures:** In a time where holistic well-being takes center stage, adventure tourism has seamlessly integrated with the wellness movement. Travellers are increasingly viewing adrenaline-pumping activities as an essential component of their wellness journey. Engaging in thrilling adventures serves not only to rejuvenate the body but also to nourish the mind and soul. From conquering towering peaks to



navigating treacherous rapids, each adventure becomes a transformative experience, fostering resilience and mental fortitude.

**Hardcore Thrills:** For adrenaline junkies and thrill-seekers, hard adventure travel offers the ultimate adrenaline rush. This rapidly growing segment caters to those who thrive on pushing their limits and conquering the impossible. Whether it's scaling vertiginous cliffs, braving tumultuous whitewater rapids, or delving into the depths of uncharted caves, hard adventure travel promises unmatched excitement and challenge. It's an exploration of the outer limits of human endurance, where each daring feat becomes a reminder of the indomitable spirit of adventure.

To conclude, the adventure tourism industry is growing thanks to new trends that meet the varied needs of contemporary tourists. There's a notable recognition within the industry of the significance of mental health and well-being during travel, signifying a meaningful transition from the past. Additionally, a rise in backpacking travellers and a newfound appreciation for weekend adventures point to a shift towards prioritizing fulfilling experiences and sustainable approaches. These trends indicate optimism for the future of adventure tourism, promising continued growth and exciting opportunities for exploration and enjoyment.

# Phuket's Burgeoning Real Estate Ecosystem

*Ravi Chandran, Corporate Affairs Advisor, Amal Group, takes a look at the factors shaping the real estate market of the popular holiday destination*



Phuket's real estate sector is booming. This tropical Thai island has long held a reputation as being one of the world's most desirable destinations to visit. Now, in the evolving landscape of the post-pandemic era, the 'Pearl of the Andaman' is becoming one of the most popular places to invest in luxury property and start a new life.

The appeal of Phuket is clear to see. With its year-round climate, stunning sandy beaches (26 in total) and crystal-clear seas, this is the ultimate tropical paradise. But these natural assets alone are not enough to attract discerning investors; what sets Phuket apart is its world-class infrastructure and facilities, including nine hospitals, 13 international schools, eight shopping centres, four marinas, 16 golf courses and, of course, its international airport which welcomes regular flights from major global airlines

including Emirates and Etihad.

This blend of natural beauty, accessibility and connectivity is fuelling the real estate boom in Phuket. According to C9 Hotelworks, the leading Phuket-based hospitality consultancy, the island's real estate transactions reached a total market value of THB 27.51 billion (USD 760 million / AED 2.8 billion) in the first half of 2023. This followed a significant upswing in 2022, when the total market value hit THB 48.15 billion – a substantial 30% increase from the previous year. In fact, since H1 2022, the average transaction value for houses in Phuket has surged by a staggering 48.9%.

## Demand Rises on Phuket's Sunset Coast

Naturally, the highest prices are commanded by properties that lie on or close to Phuket's west coast. Blessed

with a string of crescent-shaped sandy beaches and lapped by the Andaman Sea, this stretch of coast also has the benefit of stunning daily sunsets. One of these beautiful west-facing beaches, Bang Tao Bay, is home to some of the island's most prestigious hotels and resorts, including the Banyan Tree, as well as chic beach clubs. It is little surprise therefore, that Bang Tao and neighbouring Layan Beach have emerged as the leading locations for branded residences in Phuket, commanding a combined total of 45% market share, with 1,927 units, according to C9 Hotelworks'.

One major new project at Bangtao Bay is Gardens of Eden, a spectacular 11.7-hectare development which celebrated its ground-breaking ceremony on 10th May 2024. The vision of Dubai-funded property company Amal Development and award-winning

architecture and interior design studio, Tierra Design, this highly sustainable development is set to transform the real estate landscape in Phuket. Only 30% of the total project area will be built up, with the remaining 70% being left as green, open space. This is unheard of in property development – especially in a destination with limited space such as Phuket. With parks, wetlands and forests (more than 1,000 native trees will be planted on the site), plus natural swimming pools, fitness trails and a 5,000m<sup>2</sup> wellness centre, this will be a genuine haven of tranquility.



## Family Values Drive Sustainability Trend

The focus on sustainability is becoming an increasingly decisive factor in the real estate sector, especially in an "out-of-town" destination like Phuket. As high-net-worth individuals settle down and start families, their primary concern switches to the health and happiness of their children. The traffic congestion and air pollution in major cities is encouraging many senior executives and entrepreneurs to escape their urban lives and seek a cleaner, greener environment to raise their family.

With the rapid advancements in technology and connectivity, which have accelerated since the global pandemic, many professionals are now able to run their businesses from anywhere in the world. So, where could it be better to live, work and raise a family than Phuket? Amal Development's CEO has even committed to move his family to Gardens of Eden – a considerable vote of confidence in the project, and in Phuket itself.

With so much demand for Phuket, there could be concern that this tropical island retreat could itself become overburdened and congested. But this Thai province is taking steps to alleviate this with a series of major improvements to its transport infrastructure. The planned Phuket Expressway and

Kathu-Patong tunnel will help speed up accessibility across the island, and a potential light rail network will connect the airport with major tourist areas. The passenger capacity of Phuket International Airport is expected to increase 44% from 12.5 million to 18 million by 2027, creating additional options for international visitors, and a proposed Andaman International Airport could even raise this capacity to 40 million annual passengers.

As the world moves away from the traditional constraints of urban living, more savvy families will seek new lifestyles in idyllic destinations, such as Phuket. This will further drive the island's real estate boom and create strong long-term benefits for those who invest in the island.



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# ‘We are Doctors in Digital Services’

**John Liu, CEO of jumpAD, speaks to Business Frontier about his passion for technology, the innovative digital advertising solutions offered by the AI company and being a ‘Digital Marketing Therapist’**

**W**ith a strong foundation in engineering and internet programming, **John Liu, CEO of AI firm jumpAD,** has expertly bridged the gap between technology and marketing to help the company emerge as one of the leading digital marketing agencies in Taiwan.

jumpAd, which is also Google Partner company today, not only offers innovative AI-driven advertising solutions but also balances tradition with cutting-edge innovation to ensure sustainable growth for clients and businesses.

In an interview with **Business Frontier**, Liu speaks about his early years in the industry, his passion for technology and the innovative AI-driven advertising solutions offered by his company.

## Can you share your background? How did you become involved in technology and digital marketing?

I have an engineering background, and internet programming technology is a subject I have specialised in since I was small. In fact, I represented my school at a popular national-level science exhibition competition and won in the electronic technology category. I was even invited to be interviewed by the then President of the Republic of China.

However, no matter how good technology is, it cannot be promoted well without marketing. Therefore, I started from the basics and invested myself in the field of digital marketing, trying to use online advertising to smoothly expose the merchant's products and services, and attract customers.



## What are jumpAD’s core offerings?

We provide AI advertising effect systems for enterprises and I keep reminding company managers that we are not selling, but serving customers by dealing with digital issues, and optimising customer growth tools.

We are doctors in digital services, developing solutions for our clients and I am proud to say that we have obtained the invention patent from the Republic of China and also been awarded with several recognitions from top media houses for our services.

“  
*I started from the basics and invested myself in the field of digital marketing, trying to use online advertising to smoothly expose the merchant’s products and services, and attract customers.*”

We do very little proactive advertising or business sales. Ninety per cent of our customers come to us for diagnosis and treatment on their own.

## In today’s data-driven world, what role does digital marketing play in building a brand?

We cannot live without the internet. Every industry is dependent on it. However, we need to assess which digital tools are appropriate for which industry as it's all about the type of tools and investment ratio used in internet marketing.

A brand’s influence can be collected through online public opinion evaluations and its exposure can be amplified through digital marketing. Thanks to the internet, consumers can also communicate directly with a brand.

The internet is full of data, and it is this data that drives the growth of AI, which then recommends high-quality brands to more consumers. For example, YouTube’s video recommendations allow more viewers to know the brand, become curious and actively search for it, thereby seeing more brand advertisements and giving viewers more opportunities to become consumers of the brand.

## What has been your most significant learning experience in all these years?

We have encountered many problems in the process of serving customers and developing our service system, many of which originated from our own creativity. There have been times when some of our crazy ideas have led to bottlenecks in development. But instead of giving up easily, we came up with new ideas to solve the problem. Perhaps it is this spirit and courage of not admitting



defeat that led us to develop solutions and obtain national invention patents.

These challenges became the core of our experiences and led to the growth of our company. Today, jumpAD is not about being inventive but rather, staying passionate about solving problems in the digital realm for our clients and ourselves. Creating solutions brings us a sense of joy, accomplishment, and honour. In fact, we even call ourselves the ‘Digital Market Therapists’.

## How do you balance preserving jumpAD’s traditional framework with the need to innovate?

I believe that as the Founder and CEO of the company, I am responsible for the company’s brand. Innovation must be based on optimising the traditional framework. We can be bold and innovative, but still cannot violate existing traditional legal norms. After all, tradition has gone through many years of regulatory baptism.

Once the two conflict, innovative thinking must be tolerant. We need to think of ways, and constantly find suitable solutions. For example, when we develop digital marketing and artificial intelligence technologies, we often cross the line of personal data privacy. Of course, AI technology research and development must meet the needs of human nature and bring practical help, but it must not cause disgust among consumers.

In addition, if you want to provide innovative services sustainably, you must also be friendly towards global environmental resources and not

accidentally damage the earth’s resources in the process of serving your guests.

## How is jumpAD leveraging innovation to stay ahead and serve its clients better?

jumpAD provides feasible digital solutions and addresses the pain points of digital transformation for customers. Therefore, we often unexpectedly find innovative solutions while addressing a client’s needs.

As a Google Partner, we often accidentally discover Google system problems in the process of serving customers. Through video conferences with the Google Support Team, we explain how the problems occurred, as well as offer our suggestions and debugs. This process can also unexpectedly give us new inspiration.

The problems our customers encounter and the ones we encounter while using Google products are the seeds that spark innovation.

## What are jumpAD’s future goals and ambitions?

We want to keep providing customers excellent digital marketing solutions and support customer growth, which will in turn lead to the growth of the society and the global environment. What I want is not a one-time service for my clients but a valuable long-term collaboration and growth cycle.

We will also strengthen our online presence so that our ideas and professional knowledge can reach more customers and partners.



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# Creating a Culture of Consistent Learning

**Enrique Antonio Reyes, Vice President & People Growth and Productivity Champion, Converge ICT Solutions, speaks about the key lessons he has learnt throughout his successful career**



A seasoned professional with over two decades of experience in the pharmaceutical and marketing industries, **Enrique Antonio Reyes** began his career as a medical representative at SmithKline Beecham (now GSK) and rose to become Associate Director and Public Sector Lead for Merck Sharp and Dohme's local subsidiary.

A graduate of the University of Santo Tomas with a degree in Pharmacy, Reyes has completed various management and

marketing courses, including a Doctorate in Business Administration from De La Salle University in Manila, and values continuous learning. Currently the **Vice President & People Growth and Productivity Champion, Converge ICT Solutions Inc.**, Reyes contributes to the growth of the Philippines' fastest-growing internet services provider and is deeply committed to fostering a culture of excellence in his field.

In an interview with **Business Frontier**, Reyes speaks about his transition from

the pharma to the tech industry and the key lessons he has learnt throughout his successful career.

**From your early days as a medical representative to your current role at Converge ICT Solutions, how has your approach to leadership evolved?**

In my early career as a medical representative, leadership was centred on personal discipline and meeting

individual targets. As I transitioned into managerial and executive roles, my leadership approach evolved from focusing on personal achievement to empowering and supporting teams. I've come to realise that leadership isn't just about giving direction; it's about fostering an environment where people can thrive, collaborate, and innovate.

At Converge ICT, my emphasis is on building capabilities, aligning productivity initiatives with organisational goals, and nurturing talent. Over time, I've developed into a more empathetic leader, understanding that the growth and success of the team ultimately drive the growth of the entire organisation.

**What inspired you to transition from the pharmaceutical industry to the tech industry, and how have your experiences shaped your role at Converge ICT Solutions?**

The transition from the pharmaceutical industry to the tech industry wasn't a conscious decision but rather, a natural progression driven by a desire to take on new challenges and have a broader impact. Technology is transformative in its ability to connect communities and drive innovation, which intrigued me.

My background in pharmaceuticals, where attention to detail, regulatory compliance, and a customer-centric approach was essential, has been invaluable in my role at Converge ICT. It has enabled me to bring a customer-first mindset to our operations, ensuring we deliver services that truly meet the needs of our employees while adapting to the fast-moving tech landscape.

**Could you share an example of a challenging situation related to people growth or productivity that you faced, and how you successfully navigated it?**

One of the most challenging situations I faced was during the business transformation phase at Converge ICT. As we redefined our business model, it became clear that our workforce needed to grow in capability just as rapidly as the company. Teams were struggling with workload management and productivity, creating bottlenecks in performance. To address this, we introduced targeted training programs and developed a mentorship framework

that focused on upskilling employees while streamlining workflow efficiency.

Additionally, we began implementing agile methodologies to enhance organisational responsiveness and efficiency. By prioritising both people growth and productivity, we successfully aligned our workforce with the company's ambitious goals, enabling us to move forward more effectively.

**How do you measure the success of your initiatives aimed at boosting productivity and fostering growth at Converge ICT?**

We measure the success of our productivity and growth initiatives through a blend of qualitative and quantitative metrics at the individual, group, and corporate levels. At the individual level, we track performance improvements using Objectives and Key Results (OKRs), while at the Group and Department levels, we use key performance indicators (KPIs). At the corporate level, we monitor progress through our scorecard. Additionally, regular feedback from employees and managers provides valuable insights into how these initiatives are influencing daily workflows and team dynamics.

We also gauge growth by the career opportunities available to our team members, the development of key talent and leaders, and our overall ability to execute the organisational strategy. Ultimately, success is seen when these initiatives drive tangible business outcomes, such as market expansion and improved service delivery.

**You've had the opportunity to work with global brands across different industries. What are some key lessons you've carried with you throughout these transitions?**

Working with global organisations has taught me the critical importance of adaptability, decisive leadership, and maintaining a long-term strategic vision. Each industry has its own unique dynamics, but the ability to adapt to new environments while staying true to core leadership principles is essential. I've also learned that building strong, cohesive teams and fostering open communication are fundamental to achieving success. Whether in pharmaceuticals, construction solutions, appliances, or tech, a relentless focus

**“ Each industry has its own unique dynamics, but the ability to adapt to new environments while staying true to core leadership principles is essential. ”**

on customer needs and a commitment to continuous improvement remain universal drivers of success.

**How do you stay motivated and continue to grow professionally, especially after two decades of a successful career?**

Staying motivated stems from a blend of curiosity, a passion for learning, and a strong desire to make a meaningful impact. I actively seek out new challenges and stay up to date with emerging trends in both leadership and industry developments. Mentoring others and witnessing their growth is another significant source of inspiration for me. On a personal level, I prioritise continuous learning through courses, industry events, and reading. I view leadership as a lifelong journey, where there's always something new to learn—whether it's from peers, advancing technologies, or the next generation of leaders.

**What advice would you give to emerging leaders who aspire to drive people growth and productivity in their organisations?**

My advice is to lead with empathy and curiosity. Take the time to understand the strengths, aspirations, and needs of your team members, and align those with your organisation's goals. Don't hesitate to innovate and challenge the status quo when it comes to driving people growth and productivity. Foster a culture of continuous learning and collaboration, where individuals feel empowered to contribute and grow. Lastly, be resilient. Growth is a long-term process—it requires patience, consistency, and the ability to navigate challenges with a solutions-focused mindset.

# Straddling Architecture Consultancy like a Colossus



With 42 years in the profession behind him, Danilo Aquino – President & CEO – Archetype Philippines Inc., showcases expertise with collaborators in four continents

The significance of construction consultancy in building projects cannot be overstated. As global demand for sophisticated buildings increases, skyscrapers and towering structures rise to dominate the skyline. In a world constrained by limited land resources, the vertical growth of commercial and office spaces necessitates cutting-edge technological innovations. It is here that qualified experts from reputable companies leverage their expertise to achieve outstanding success.

Archetype Philippines is one such company that has blazed a trail in the industry. Under the leadership of President and CEO Danilo Aquino, the company has earned a distinguished reputation as a reliable partner for clients. Armed with a Master's degree in Structural Engineering and vast experience, Aquino towers over the world of design and construction, exuding an aura of invincibility that enhances the finesse with which Archetype Philippines delivers its projects.

In an interview with **Business Frontier**, Danilo Aquino highlights the crucial role of architectural and engineering consultancy and emphasizes the importance of leading by example for effective leadership



“My approach to leadership is embedded in the fact that effective leadership varies depending on the situation and the individuals involved. I prefer an unconventional approach, leading by example. Rather than simply instructing my team, I like to demonstrate tasks myself first. I foster a collaborative environment, viewing my staff as friends rather than subordinates.”

## You have extensive experience in the architectural consultancy sector. How do you look at your professional past?

My professional journey spans 42 years and is marked by numerous achievements and milestones. It all began with an eight-year tenure at the Lyceum of the Philippines University, where I eventually rose to the position of Chairman at the College of Civil Engineering. Between 1990 and 2007, I held several key positions at prominent international construction companies, including ABV Rock Group, Express Builders, Meinhardt Philippines, and Arenco Architectural and Engineering Consultants.

From 2007 to 2019, I started as a Structural Manager and got promoted as the Director and Head of Structural Engineering and Design Integration at NORR Group Consultants International Dubai. Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to work with some of the best minds in the industry, contributing to a variety of significant projects and advancing my expertise in architectural consultancy.

## Please give us a lowdown on the nature of operations of the organisation.

Archetype Group is a premier international construction consultancy company, renowned for shaping enduring buildings and providing a comprehensive suite of consulting services. Our expertise spans Architecture & Master Planning, Building Engineering, Industrial & Process Engineering, and Project & Cost Management. Since our inception in 2002, we have demonstrated our

proficiency, experience, and extensive knowledge in serving the hospitality, real estate, and industrial sectors, with successful collaborations across four continents—Asia, Africa, Europe, and America.

Our team of highly qualified professionals is committed to delivering top-notch services in various construction domains, including buildings and real estate, industry and manufacturing, and energy and infrastructure. We leverage innovative thinking and exceptional expertise to ensure the successful completion of projects, consistently meeting and exceeding our clients' expectations.

## What is your approach to leadership, and which is your favourite leadership style to lead your team?

My approach to leadership is embedded in the fact that effective leadership varies depending on the situation and the individuals involved. I prefer an unconventional approach, leading by example. Rather than simply instructing my team, I like to demonstrate tasks myself first. I foster a collaborative environment, viewing my staff as friends rather than subordinates. I value creativity and give equal consideration to ideas from both new and experienced employees. My priority is to set specific goals, analyse the market, study the competition, develop long-term strategies, and be prepared to make course corrections as needed.

## What do you envision for the future of the Archetype Group?

In the next five years, we aim to become the premier consulting

firm in the Philippines. Our unwavering commitment to providing environmentally-friendly and sustainable solutions will remain at the core of our mission. With the support of our parent company Archetype Group, we will continue to deliver resilient and sustainable design solutions. By fostering lasting relationships with our clients and offering tailored services, we strive to meet their unique needs. We recognize the significant impact of emerging trends, such as the increased use of digital technology, and are eager to integrate these advancements to offer more sophisticated and innovative designs to our clients.

## Being an experienced professional in the industry, what message would you like to give the others in the sector?

Architecture consultancy is going to evolve rapidly in keeping with the business environment and needs of society. People's lifestyle is also going to have an impact on the sector and the way it evolves. For instance, the pandemic was instrumental in changing the way clients and firms interacted, which has led to the dynamics of operations undergoing significant changes. Several organisations have realised that working from home has its own advantages in terms of cost management and better work-life balance for employees. I would like to tell business leaders to be mentally prepared for the management of change not only in terms of the style of working but also because of the imminent changes to the technological environment that is likely to prove intrusive.

# Fostering Pathways for Rural Progress

**Mohan Karki, Managing Director of K. M. Engineers Builders, shares his inspiring journey from rural Nepal to leading a company focused on infrastructure development**

**W**ith over 35 bridges successfully constructed in the hilly terrains of Nepal, K. M. Engineers Builders stands as a beacon of hope for communities in need. Founded by **Mohan Karki**, who grew up in the remote hills of the nation and dedicated to delivering essential infrastructure to rural areas, the company has transformed the lives of countless villagers, providing vital access to education, healthcare, and safety.

In an interview with **Business Frontier**, **Karki, Managing Director of K. M. Engineers Builders**, shares how his formative experiences shaped his vision for infrastructure development. He discusses how his company continues to expand its positive impact across Nepal's most isolated regions, striving to build a better future for all.

## How did your early life experiences in the hilly regions of Nepal shape your vision for infrastructure development?

I was born in a small village in the hilly district Okhaldhunga of eastern Nepal, surrounded by towering mountains. Back then, reaching the nearest motorable road meant a four-five-day trek on foot. When I was just seven, I made my first journey with my father, traversing steep slopes and cliffs and crossing hundreds of rivers and streams. After days of exhausting travel, we finally reached the road.

Even today, I vividly recall every bit of those trails. Eight years later, when I was around 15, I retraced that path alone, guided only by those childhood memories. As I walked, I imagined the

city's roads and bridges extending to my village, connecting it to the outside world. My young mind was filled with dreams of building roads and bridges, though I had no idea what kind of education or skills were needed to make that a reality.

Luckily, I found myself working for a reputed construction company, and the dreams from my childhood began to resurface. Determined, I set out to start my own company. As fate would have it, I had the chance to acquire a construction firm specialising in building bridges. This was a turning point for me. Today, most of our projects involve bridge construction, which allows me to live out my childhood dreams through my business.

## How do you prioritise safety and environmental sustainability across your projects?

Our company's mission is to contribute to rural infrastructure development. Most of our projects are small to medium-sized, which naturally reduces their environmental impact. Safety is always our top priority. We ensure the well-being of our employees, labourers, and local communities, taking special care to protect their health. After completing every project, we also engage in initiatives like tree planting and protecting local water sources from contamination, ensuring a sustainable and positive impact on the environment.

## What role do you believe infrastructure plays in connecting remote communities with urban centres in Nepal?

Having grown up in a remote region, I know firsthand how difficult life can be

without access to proper infrastructure. In my village, we had to stock up on essentials like salt and kerosene for the entire year. Once a year, villagers would trek for four to five days to bring these basic supplies home. While it was a necessity, it also shaped our simple, self-sustained lifestyle.

Today, roads have reached even the most remote areas, changing lives dramatically. However, there is still a significant lack of motorable bridges, especially across Nepal's hundreds of rivers and streams. Recent studies show that Nepal needs 600-700 more bridges.

The monsoon season makes travel extremely difficult in hilly areas, while lowland regions are frequently flooded, cutting off villages from essential services. Many children cannot attend school due to the risks involved in crossing rivers. Sometimes, people can't access emergency medical care because of this lack of connectivity. Bridges are not just about transportation but about access to education, healthcare, and safety.

## What motivates you to expand K.M. Engineer's Builders in Nepal's remote areas?

KM Engineers is a commercial construction firm, but profit isn't our primary motivator. Our fundamental mission is to bring happiness and opportunity to remote villages. While larger companies often take on big infrastructure projects, we focus on making a meaningful impact where it's most needed. Seeing the joy and relief on the villagers' faces when they finally have a bridge connecting them to the rest of the world is our valid reward.

“ We've independently designed and constructed about half a dozen bridges and are constantly improving through regular training and by adopting new technologies. This keeps us competitive and ensures that the quality of our work is second to none. ”

Since 2015, we've successfully constructed over 35 bridges, helping to uplift rural communities. We have also been firmly committed to completing projects within deadlines and supporting the government's infrastructure goals. We have completed some of our bridges well before the deadline, bringing them into service sooner than expected. Our reputation is built on delivering what we promise.

## How do you ensure a strong company culture across different project sites?

We believe in more than just delivering projects on time; we aim to create a supportive environment for our workers. We pay close attention to their health, their families' well-being, and even their children's education and healthcare. Many of our workers have been with us for eight to nine years and are willing to continue in the coming days because they know that we care about them beyond just their work. This long-term loyalty and mutual respect are vital to maintaining a solid company culture.

## How do you integrate innovative technologies into your construction projects to improve efficiency and quality?

Constructing bridges is inherently challenging, but we pride ourselves on building structures that last more than 50 years. We don't just build bridges—we design them too. We've independently designed and constructed about half a dozen bridges and are constantly improving through regular training and by adopting new technologies. This keeps



us competitive and ensures that the quality of our work is second to none.

## What advice would you give young professionals aspiring to make a difference in the construction industry?

Nepal may be a lesser developed country but it has untapped potential for infrastructure development. There is so much work to be done — whether on roads, bridges, high-rise buildings, hydropower projects, cable cars, or even metro and railway systems.

Situated between two economic giants, Nepal is a land of opportunity,

especially in construction. Exploiting these opportunities requires a skilled workforce. Nepal offers ample prospects for young professionals eager to make a difference.

Young professionals have an incredible chance to make a real difference. However, many young people like to go abroad because they believe bureaucratic hurdles and regulations are tough to handle.

But the power to change Nepal lies in our hands. If we work together, the next generation can turn Nepal into a paradise through infrastructure development.

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