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FASHION / DESIGN / ARCHITECTURE / ART / CULTURE

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Urban Legends

THE ARCHITECTS MAKING
OUR CITIES BETTER

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DEEP GREEN DESIGN

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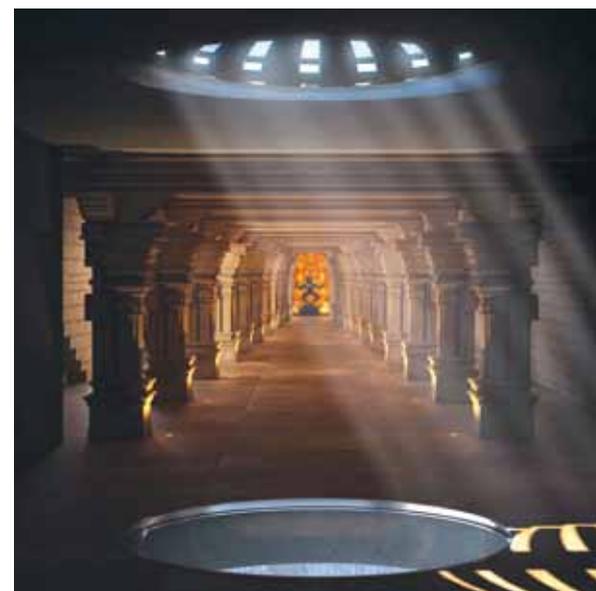
TALL STORIES:
ASIA'S SUPER-TOWERS

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PHILIPPINES
NEW ART MASTERS

+

LAKMÉ FLOWERS:
INDIA'S FASHION WEEK
BLOOMS



tekka look

A glowing, faceted design for the Indian Heritage Centre is set to add even more life to Singapore's vibrant Little India district.

WORDS ANITA SUREWICZ

Indian heritage has been an integral part of the cultural and demographic melting pot of Singapore since the early 1800s, and the Little India district in Rochor is today one of the liveliest parts of the island city, packed with fragrant flower and spice markets, cafés serving singe-your-tastebuds-hot curries and exuberantly decorated temples.

To celebrate Singapore's third largest ethnic group, a new Indian Heritage Centre, due for completion in December 2013, will be built on Campbell Lane in the heart of Little India, just around the corner from the stylish Wanderlust Hotel. The blueprint for the \$12 million building, which will house galleries and educational spaces, was unveiled in July following a competition for locally registered architecture firms. The winning design was selected from a total of 38 submissions. A collaboration between URBNarc and Robert Greg Shand Architects, 'A Glowing Lantern for Little India' is said to translate the Indian Heritage Centre's vision into "an iconic, unique and sustainable building that blends both traditional Indian and modern architectural elements."

The diversity of Indian culture is reflected in the building's eye-catching translucent façade, which will make the building look like a "shining jewel" during the day and a "glowing lantern" at night. "The inspiration for IHC evolved from a spiritual idea of the all-encompassing universe providing shelter and sanctuary. This concept was then translated into physical form using key traditional Indian elements and metaphors," says URBNarc principal Gaurang Khemka.

The design was inspired by the *Baoli*, or the Indian stepped well, which is both the source of vital water and a traditional meeting point for the community. "The thread in this case is the steps from the *Baoli* that further evolves into a path that links the primary activity points within the building, and is expressed as a 'path of growth', a vine aspiring upwards along a fluid, sensuous, playful, colourful path, culminating into the light at roof top level," Khemka explains.

The centre is also the embodiment of the Indian concept of *Purusha Prakriti*, or the philosophy of duality encompassing opposites that create a whole, such as light/dark, male/female and old/new. "It's a manifestation of permanence – 'matter' – whilst the people and exhibits and the path – 'spirit' – are ever changing," Khemka says. gregshand.net, indianheritage.org.sg, urbnarc.com 