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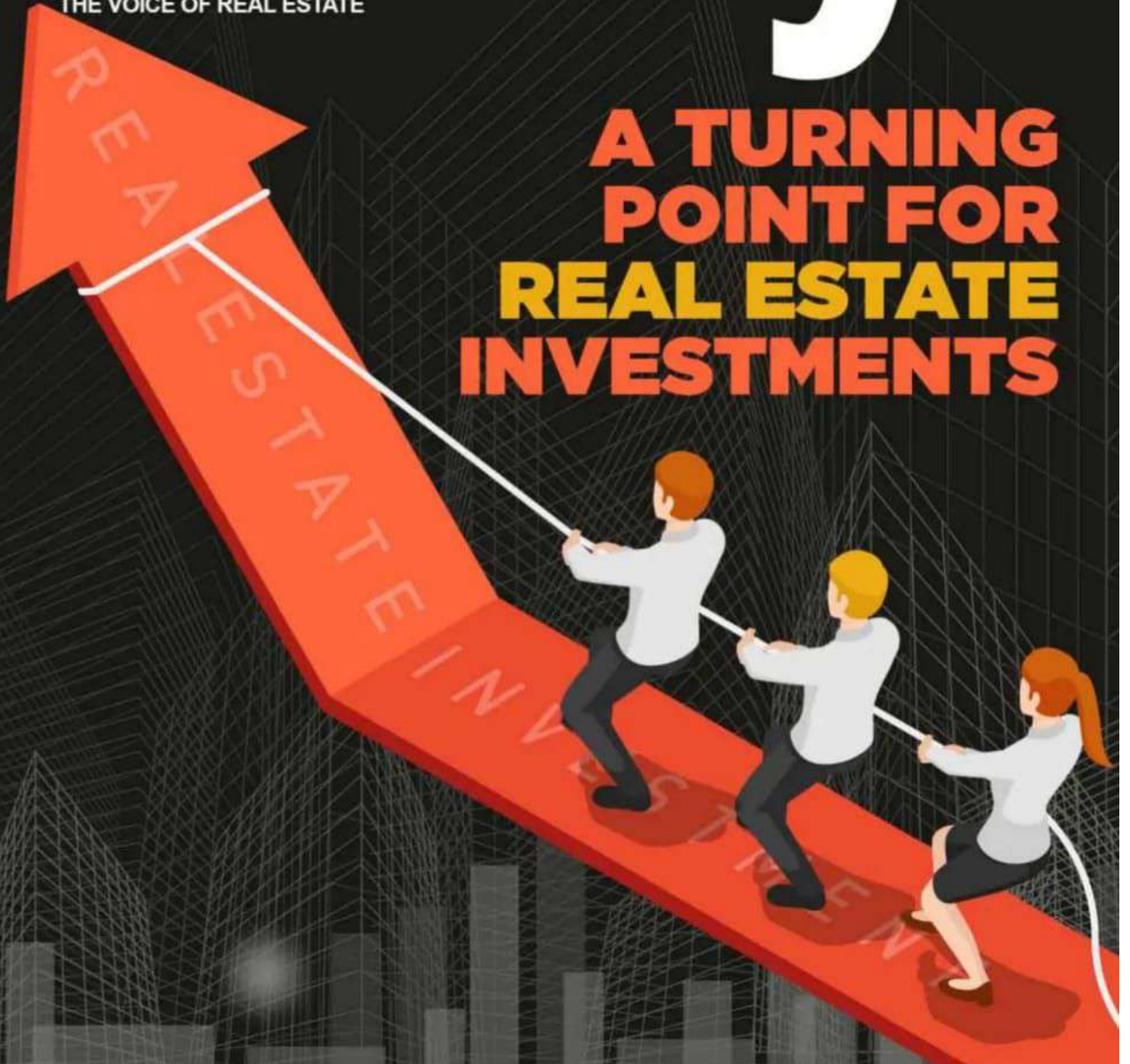
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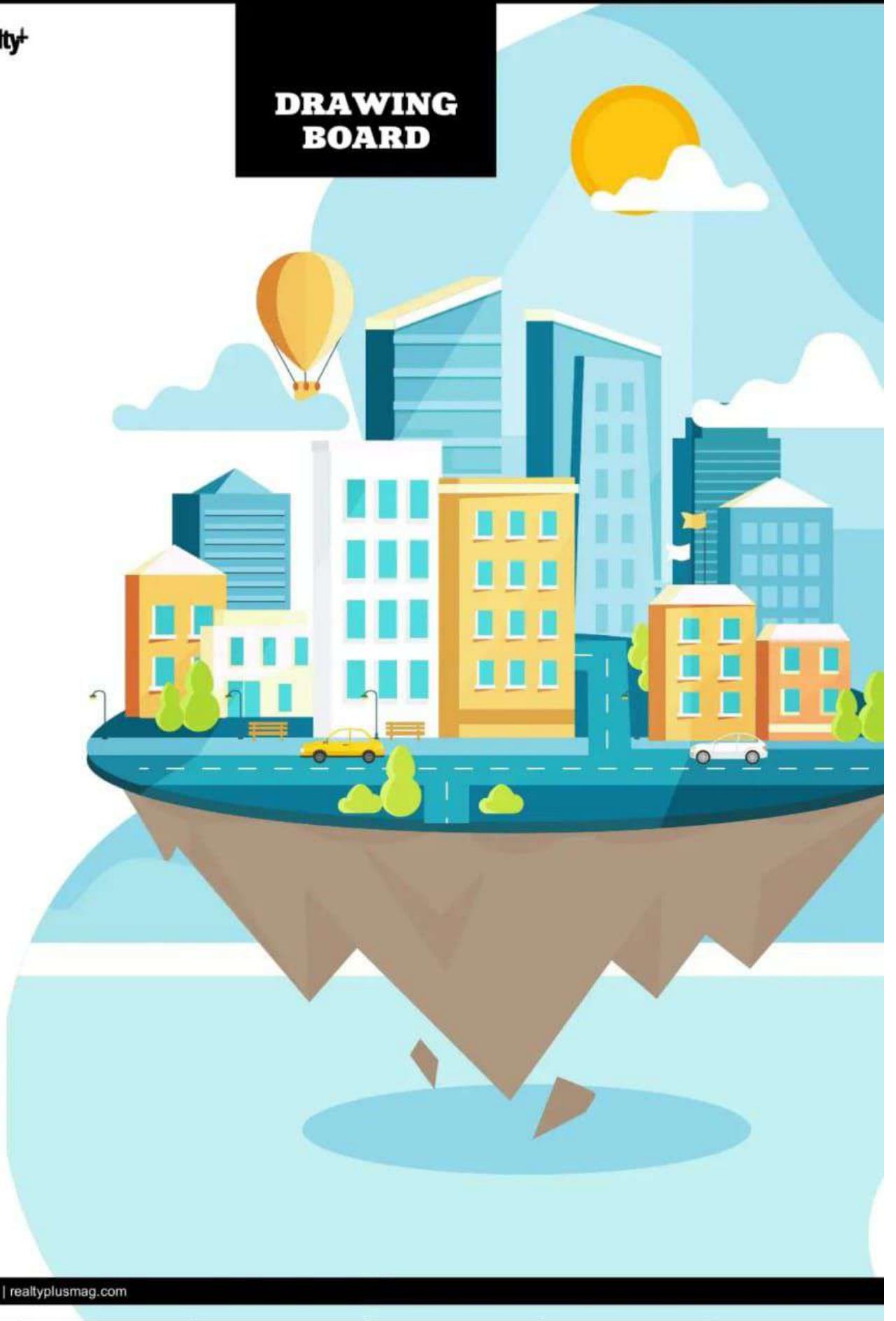
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# DRAWING BOARD



# MEASURING COVID IMPACT ON DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

THE ONGOING COVID 19 PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED EVERYONE'S LIVES, INCLUDING THE ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT OF OUR BUILDINGS AND CITIES. REALTY+ TAKES STOCK OF THE CHANGES IN THE DESIGN SECTOR.

**By: Leandra Monteiro**

**T**he Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant national lockdown has created ripples across all industries, inevitably casting its shadow on the profession of architecture and design as well. The architecture and interior design domains require constant communication with developers, vendors and labourers, but with the stalling of projects, a lot has been thrown out of gear.

Projects which are in the design stage are getting shelved due to the market predictions of crashing. The projects which are under construction are facing difficulties because of labour migration and as per government guidelines. Thus, the projects will be delayed in delivery, ultimately affecting everyone - from clients to architects, labours, traders, developers and so on. However, on a positive note, this is the time to optimise design development and detailing, say architects. Due to the flexibility of the process and nature of the industry, design goes on even in such tough times. Since design work is visual and collaborative, it can be achieved using various collaborative tools.



### COPING WITH CHANGE

For many in the architecture and design community, post COVID-19 might mean they have to design for a world that will never be quite the same. "Since the lockdown, we've had to change the way we work with our clients. As we are no longer physically making design presentations, the interaction has become much more conversational. The act of discussing, rather than presenting, has had a massive effect on the engagement of our clients. Work can be shared and discussed over digital platforms, but one has to rely on the trust and rapport with the client. Material selection and site supervision are the most effected aspects of projects, said **Prashant Paradava – Principal Architect of PDC Architects**, an Ahmedabad based architectural firm.



On living with the virus and adjusting to the new normal, **Khözema Chitalwala Principal Architect, Designers Group** feels that avoiding human interaction and intervention in the design sector is impossible as the experience can never be the same. "We as designers are keenly waiting for new design guidelines in order to incorporate them in our designs ensuring their rapid reopening which is a challenge in the current scenario. The need of the hour for the designers is to look into the interior spaces with accommodation functionality or limited areas, where practising social distancing can be problematic. We as designers expect the authorities to



One of the significant challenge that architects are facing is the sudden change in work culture. To intersect this, several factors will have to be addressed, such as more resilience to physical disruption, acceptance and adaptation to remote working, easy and light software's to switch work into, the thought behind the space design and creating living environment in the smaller squares sewed into urban fabric.

introduce a universal touchstone where properties can be categorized into Covid-19 compliant and otherwise for the comfort, safety and content of the guests."

**Gobind Kapur, Product Designer and Partner, Maison Du Luxe** added, "The product industry is severely affected as manufacturing units have closed down. Businesses are being forced to adapt to continue to support employees, customers and clients by providing flexible and innovative solutions in response to the challenging social climate created by the spread of COVID-19. There are umpteen challenges that this crisis has brought along, but creative people adapt, plan and innovate and turn a bad situation into a learning point."



Talking about the impact on the architecture industry **Abhigyan Neogi, Founder, Chromed Design Studio** stated, "Architects need to interact and meet to discuss a lot of things in person which is the core challenge posed by work from home. A lot of architects are using this time to future proof their designs and investing their time to prepare after the lockdown is over. 30% of the architects are working and using this time to be well equipped when all this ends but for the rest of 70%, work has come to an abrupt halt since there is absolutely no monetary transaction."



### CHANGING MODES OF WORK

Architects are turning to virtual medium for both working and socialising during the pandemic. The flow of work for these professionals has rapidly shifted from the on-field to in-house workflow. Improving remote communication abilities, storing project files in the cloud, and implementing the use of BIM models are just a few ways that architects have come to adapt and modernize their methods of practice.

"Much has changed in this post-pandemic world. Businesses are opening with limited staff and construction sites are adjusting to the new normal of working. The traditional on-site meetings and coordination would need to find a new medium to continue to have successfully completed projects," shared **Sumit Dhawan Founder & Principal, Cityspace'82 Architects**.



"The need to go digital, to embrace and invest in technology in this new phase would be just as critical as connecting to the people involved in the process. If one needs to bring the number of on-site workers down, then off-site production needs to be stepped up. Offices need to look at outsourcing working drawings, 3D or primarily anything that can be