

WILL HOLD EXTENSIVE PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS: HARDEEP PURI

Firm behind Sabarmati riverfront beats five others to bag Lutyens' Delhi revamp project

Expected project deadline is 2024

ANANYA TIWARI & SHINY VARGHESE
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OVER A month after the Centre proposed an ambitious plan to revamp Lutyens' Delhi, the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) Friday announced that Gujarat-based HCP Design, Planning & Management Pvt. Ltd will execute the project.

The firm, headed by Dr Bimal Patel beat five bidders to bag the coveted project, which is expected to be completed by 2024. Patel's firm, set up by his father Hasmukh C Patel in 1960, designed the Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, and the Central Vista and state secretariat in Gandhinagar, when Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister.

The Delhi redevelopment project entails sprucing up of Rajpath, retrofitting of the Parliament, and demolition and reconstruction of the Central Vista bhavans. The sanction cost or consultancy fee amounts to Rs 229.75 crore, against the estimated cost of Rs 448 crore.

"I can say with full degree of confidence that all six companies submitted bids, which I can only describe as each better than the other," said Urban Development Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Bimal Patel said: "HCP's design philosophy is to focus on solving practical problems so as to make deeply meaningful structures. It always wants to ensure excellence in design, and robust high quality construction. The Parliament and Central Secretariat will be iconic but also highly functional. We wish that the design will say that we are proud and secure about our past, and confidently facing our future."

Patel's firm, which had

worked on the new IIM-Ahmedabad building, is currently involved with the Kashi Vishwanath corridor in Varanasi.

Early September, the CPWD had submitted a request for proposal of the project online and 24 firms showed interest. Finally, six bidders emerged, who faced a six-member jury, headed by Professor P S N Rao, director of School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) and Delhi Urban Arts Commission (DUAC).

Apart from HCP, the other bidders were CP Kulkreja Architects, Sikka Associates Architects, INI Design Studio, Arcop Associates Pvt Ltd and Architect Hafiez Contractor. "Bids were evaluated with 80% weightage to technical score and 20% to financial score," said Prabhakar Singh, director, CPWD.

Some of the aspects that will be taken care of by the firm include developing the new master plan of the Central Vista, traffic integration, air quality management and green construction.

Puri said the firm will hold extensive public consultations with all stakeholders, and that the plans may be put up online for all to see. "The secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is also meeting those who were not awarded the tender. We will try to factor in their ideas as well."

He reiterated that "at no stage was it suggested that old heritage buildings be reconstructed... In none of the designs was there even an idea to demolish the existing Parliament... I still don't know what we will do with the North-South blocks."

An official said heritage specialists and traffic experts will also be consulted, and green cover will not be compromised.

MoHUA secretary Durga Shankar Mishra said "... in 2022, the Parliament will be held in a new building."



Project entails sprucing up Rajpath, retrofitting Parliament, demolition and reconstruction of the Central Vista bhavans. Archive

Task is to provide new building for Parliament, a space for people to enjoy: Architect Patel

SHINY VARGHESE & SOHINI GHOSH
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FOR ARCHITECT Bimal Patel (58), whose firm — HCP Design, Planning & Management — has bagged the Lutyens' Delhi redevelopment project, this is not his first brush with a public building and designing its central vista. A Padma Shri awardee, Patel had designed the new office space, Swarnim Sankul, in Gujarat for Narendra Modi, who was the chief minister then, and his cabinet in 2011.

Swarnim Sankul was designed around the legislative building in Gandhinagar, with blocks on the north and south side so as to form an integral part of the central vista of the legislative assembly.

Patel agreed that the Parliament's central vista bears similarities with the Gujarat legislative assembly's central vista, but is not without its challenges. "Another task is to provide a great public space that people can enjoy, and create a new building for the Parliament. While the design has to create something that everyone finds to be adequate, the challenge is



Bimal Patel started his architectural career in the mid-80s. Express

also to finish the project in time," he said, referring to the 2022 target.

Patel is currently handling

the Kashi Vishwanath Temple project, expected to be ready by 2021. Another project that he is closely working on is the Mumbai Port Trust development, aimed at revamping the eastern seafloor of the city.

He started his architectural career in the mid-80s with his father Hasmukh Patel. HCP was roped in by the Gujarat government in 1992 to design the High Court. With Patel's close involvement in the project, it was completed in two years.

Patel made his mark with urban development projects such as the Kankaria Lake Waterfront (2006) and the

THE TASK AHEAD

The broad scope of the consultancy is broken down as:

- Developing new master plan of central vista
- Preparation of landscape plans
- Traffic integration
- Air quality management during and after construction
- Parking and surveillance systems
- Solid waste management system and green construction
- Rainwater harvesting
- Designing & detailing of all services, amenities
- Cost estimation and detailed project report

Sabarmati Riverfront (2002). He also designed the new IIM-A campus in 2001, as an extension of the old campus designed by world-renowned architect Louis Kahn.

Patel is also president of CEPT University, where he has reimagined pedagogy and ways of teaching architecture in an institute that is over 50 years old.

Bengaluru-based architect and urban designer Naresh Narasimhan of Venkataraman Associates, one of Patel's contemporaries, said: "Bimal is a bright mind, and sensitive to culture and history, this project will be his crowning glory."

