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Shirish Nimgaonkar

From Boardrooms to Backbeats:
The Unconventional Leadership of Shirish Nimgaonkar

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Editor's Note

In a world where the corporate landscape is shifting faster than ever, Corporate World Magazine remains committed to spotlighting the leaders, innovators, and visionaries shaping the next era of business. Each edition is crafted to reflect the changing pulse of global enterprise—where strategy meets purpose, and ambition meets impact.

In this issue, we are honoured to feature Mr. Shirish Nimgaonkar, Founder & CEO of eBlissAI, as he shares his forward-looking insights on the Future of Intelligent Automation. With a proven history of scaling multiple VC- and PE-backed companies to remarkable growth and successful exits, his journey embodies the spirit of transformative leadership.

This edition also brings together the perspectives of distinguished figures including Mr. Prashant Goenka, Mr. Zulfikar Kamal, Dr. N. Ramakrishnan, and several other influential thought leaders.

At its core, this issue celebrates a powerful truth: Leadership today is not defined merely by outcomes, but by resilience, responsibility, and relevance in an ever-evolving world.

We invite you to explore the insights, stories, and strategies within these pages—and to draw inspiration from the individuals and organisations boldly redefining the future of business.

Thank you for your continued trust, readership, and support.

Happy Reading...



Warm regards

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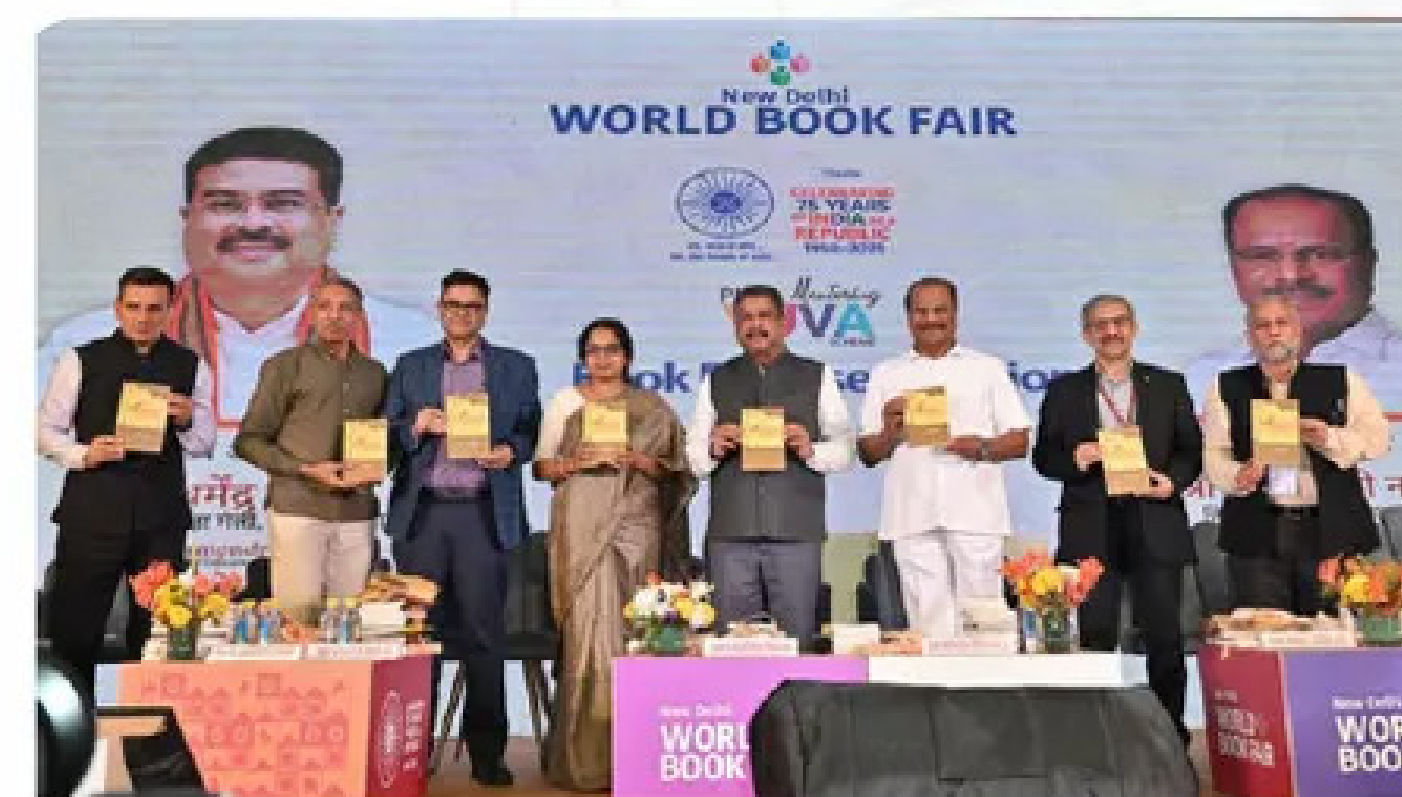
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From Boardrooms to Backbeats The Unconventional Leadership of Shirish Nimgaonkar

Shirish Nimgaonkar speaks about the Future of Intelligent Automation and his strong track record of leading multiple VC- and PE-backed companies to significant growth and successful exits.

Shirish Nimgaonkar is a rare blend of technologist, strategist, and artist — a leader whose multidisciplinary journey shapes his approach to innovation and impact. An alumnus of IIT Bombay, Stanford University, and Harvard Business School, he has built a career that spans enterprise software, AI-driven automation, and global investment banking, guiding high-growth companies across the US, Europe, and Asia. Before founding eBlissAI, he served as a Managing Director in investment banking and held leadership roles in multiple venture-backed technology firms with successful exits, building a reputation for scaling businesses with precision and foresight.

Beyond the boardroom, Shirish is a trained classical musician and the lead singer of a fusion band that uses music to support social causes. His artistic background shapes his leadership philosophy - blending structure with improvisation, discipline with intuition. Outside his entrepreneurial work, he serves as an Entrepreneur in Residence at Harvard Business School and has been a Board Member at TiE Boston (among the largest global organizations promoting entrepreneurship), mentoring the next generation of founders. This uncommon intersection of technology, strategy, and art continues to define his mission: to build systems that are intelligent, human-centered, and transformative.



human-centered, and transformative.

In this candid conversation with Corporate World, Shirish Nimgaonkar opens up about his unique leadership spectrum and insights on scaling transformative businesses, composing change through human-centered innovation, and shaping the future of AI with purpose, precision, and vision.

1. Could you walk us through your educational and professional journey along with the pivotal moments that shaped your career?

My journey has unfolded in phases, each one reshaping how I see leadership and impact. Studying at IIT Bombay taught me that excellence isn't optional — it's the starting point. Stanford widened that lens, exposing

“
**My journey across disciplines
has one common thread: solving
problems that matter.**
”



Music taught me rhythm, improvisation, and the courage to perform under pressure.

Entrepreneurship is no different — you compose, adapt, listen, and create coherence from chaos.



me to a global, diverse ecosystem of thinkers and creators who approached problems with imagination rather than boundaries. Harvard sharpened that foundation into strategic empathy — the ability to understand systems, incentives, and human behavior in equal measure.

Professionally, Intel in Silicon Valley was my first masterclass in scale. Moving into high-growth tech ventures and later investment banking, I learned how strategy, operations, and capital intersect to create or destroy value. But the pivotal shift came during my entrepreneurial stages. Scaling multiple VC- and PE-backed ventures taught me that leadership is not control; it is energy. Impact emerges when purpose, authenticity, and execution

collide.

Today, eBlissAI represents the synthesis of that journey - a belief that technology should not just automate but anticipate; that systems should adapt to humans, enhance their potential and enable bliss. As I often say, “Transformation begins when imagination finds discipline.”

2. With degrees from IIT, Stanford, and Harvard Business School, how have these experiences shaped your approach to leadership and decision-making?

Across my academic and professional life, I’ve developed a leadership framework that guides how I think and act. IIT instilled analytical depth - the discipline to deconstruct complex problems

and rebuild them with clarity. Stanford expanded that into creative exploration; it taught me that innovation is born when you push beyond orthodoxy and embrace diversity of thought. Harvard added the behavioral dimension - the responsibility to pair ambition with governance, clarity with compassion.

Together, these experiences shaped a practical decision-making framework centered on rigor, imagination, and accountability. Rigor ensures I ground decisions in data and first principles. Imagination pushes me to look beyond the visible horizon. Accountability ensures that ambition is translated into action with integrity.

My journey as a musician strengthened this further. Music

taught me rhythm, improvisation, and the courage to perform under pressure. Entrepreneurship is no different — you compose, adapt, listen, and create coherence from chaos. This blend of analytical precision, creative boldness, and artistic intuition defines how I lead today. “Great decisions are rarely loud — they are deliberate, disciplined, and deeply human.”

3. You were recognized as an ITC Management Scholar, among the top six students in India. How did that recognition impact your journey early on?

Being named an ITC Management Scholar was a defining early milestone. It reinforced the belief that excellence earns trust and that depth of preparation matters. More importantly, it taught me that recognition is not a destination - it is a responsibility. That honor helped shape my work ethic and pushed me to hold myself to higher standards, even when no one is watching.

What stayed with me was the humility embedded in the experience. When you’re surrounded by extraordinary peers, you quickly learn that talent is a gift, but discipline is a choice. That distinction became foundational. It guided how I approached opportunities, how I engaged with mentors, and how I learned to convert potential into performance.

Looking back, the award wasn’t a signal to celebrate - it was a challenge to grow. It instilled the mindset that excellence must be paired with purpose. “Achievement is temporary; character is compounding.” That belief still shapes how I operate today.

4. What’s your leadership philosophy when it comes to balancing innovation, risk, and execution?

I’ve always believed that innovation, risk, and execution form a single



continuum. Innovation sets direction, risk defines the edges, and execution brings ambition to life. My leadership philosophy is built on two anchors: clarity and momentum. Clarity ensures that teams align behind purpose and understand the “why” before pursuing the “how.” Momentum ensures that ideas convert to action - because unexecuted brilliance is indistinguishable from hesitation.

I encourage teams to experiment with discipline. Instead of chasing unrestricted creativity, we run fast, focused iterations that translate insights into outcomes. Risk, in this context, is not something to avoid; it’s something to metabolize. The goal is not to eliminate uncertainty but to manage it and transform it into learning.

I’ve learned from music that structure and improvisation are not opposites — they are partners. Leadership is similar. Structure provides coherence; improvisation provides adaptability. When these forces work together, organizations can innovate boldly while executing precisely.

As I remind my teams, “Vision without execution is imagination; execution without vision is inertia.” True leadership harmonizes the two.

5. What is the unique value proposition that sets eBliss apart and how does that translate into enhanced user experiences?

eBlissAI was built to solve a crisis: enterprise IT and endpoint management has outgrown

human-scale operations. Complexity has surged, failure zones have widened, and legacy tools still react to symptoms long after damage is done. IT teams are overwhelmed by an avalanche of alerts, and employees endure constant friction that erodes productivity and trust. The pain is no longer incremental – it’s structural. Enterprises are trapped in a reactive loop that drains billions in waste, downtime, and human effort that simply cannot keep pace.

eBlissAI breaks this cycle by delivering AI-native autonomy. It understands root causes, predicts breakdowns before they occur, personalizes performance to each user, and resolves issues end-to-end. What sets eBliss apart is the compounding engine at its core: every fix teaches the system, every insight strengthens its intelligence, and every deployment amplifies impact. This virtuous cycle of compounding knowledge, compounding value and compounding scale, generates outcomes that accelerate exponentially over time.

For employees, this translates into genuine digital bliss: technology that feels smooth, intuitive, and nearly invisible – an environment where interruptions fade and flow becomes the norm. “When intelligence becomes anticipatory, experience becomes effortless.”

6. How does eBliss help enterprises balance cost optimization with delivering a superior digital employee experience?

eBlissAI enables enterprises to achieve cost efficiency and superior experience simultaneously because it changes the underlying mechanics of IT and endpoint management. By predicting and resolving issues autonomously, the platform dramatically reduces operational load and recovers lost productivity. Many organizations see a reduction of 40–70% in operational effort, but the real transformation is qualitative.

As noise disappears and systems self-correct, employees experience technology that feels smooth, personal, and reliable – a genuine sense of digital bliss. Issues fade before they disrupt work. Devices adapt to the unique needs of each persona. Compliance becomes invisible. IT teams shift from firefighting to strategic enablement, focusing on innovation rather than repetitive triage.

This shift rewrites IT economics not through cuts, but through intelligence. When downtime drops, satisfaction rises. When friction fades, productivity surges. When autonomy replaces manual intervention, both cost and experience compound in the right direction.

As I often say, “Efficiency is not

created by reducing effort – it’s created by eliminating waste. And bliss emerges when technology finally gets out of the way.”

7. How do you approach talent recruitment and retention in highly competitive sectors?

I believe people choose environments where they can grow, experiment, and express their best selves. At eBliss, we look for individuals who are curious, courageous, and comfortable working at the edge of the unknown – qualities I learned from my own journey as a musician and entrepreneur. Artists practice relentlessly, experiment within structure, and perform under pressure. Our culture embodies those same traits.



We recruit by being clear about our mission: transforming enterprise IT through predictive autonomy. That clarity attracts builders rather than maintainers. We emphasize diversity because cognitive variety fuels creativity. Different backgrounds and perspectives spark the combinations that lead to breakthrough ideas.

Retention is created through empowerment and learning. We encourage experimentation, celebrate thoughtful risks, and treat outcomes as fuel for growth. People are given ownership, not instructions. They are expected to think, question, iterate, and improve – collectively and continuously.

What binds the culture is trust. Trust in the mission, trust in each other, and trust in the process of learning in motion. “People don’t stay for comfort – they stay for growth, purpose, and the chance to create something bold.”

8. What is one piece of wisdom you’ve learned through your journey that you’d like to share with our readers?

If there is one truth that has guided me, it is this: purpose turns uncertainty into momentum. Whether in music, entrepreneur – ship, or leadership, clarity of purpose is what enables us to navigate risk with courage and persistence. Purpose doesn’t remove obstacles, but it reframes them. It gives you the strength to experiment without fear of imperfection, to iterate without ego, and to lead without needing control. It creates resilience, because you’re anchored to something larger than the immediate challenge.

In my experience, leaders often chase certainty, but certainty is overrated. What matters is direction a sense of why it matters and whom it serve. Once that is clear, execution becomes an act of learning rather than a test of perfection. As I often remind founders, “You don’t need



the path to be certain – you need the purpose to be strong.” With purpose, progress becomes inevitable.

9. Looking ahead, what’s next for you – are there industries or ventures you’re most passionate about leading into the future?

The next chapter for me is about expanding impact – scaling what works and planting seeds for what comes next. At eBlissAI, our mission to bring predictive autonomy to enterprise IT is still in its early innings. The complexity facing organizations will only intensify, and I’m committed to shaping a future where systems learn, heal, and adapt with minimal human friction.

Beyond enterprise technology, I’m deeply invested in developing

the next generation of leaders. As an Entrepreneur in Residence at Harvard and a past board member at TiE Boston, I want to mentor founders who build with integrity and imagination. Supporting ventures that blend AI, ethics, and human-centered design is a core focus.

My artistic journey also has a central place in the future. Through my music group, I want to continue using music as a catalyst for social good – especially in child education and women’s empowerment. Music has taught me that creativity and discipline can coexist beautifully, and I intend to bring that philosophy into everything I build. As I often reflect, “Leadership isn’t about the company you run – it’s about the momentum you leave behind.”

Dr. Nagarajan Ramakrishnan

on Critical Care, Sleep Medicine & Building India's First Comprehensive Sleep Institute

In an exclusive conversation with Corporate World, Dr. Nagarajan Ramakrishnan — Founder of the Nithra Institute of Sleep Sciences and among India's earliest board-certified sleep specialists — reflects on his unconventional journey into medicine, the evolution of sleep medicine in India, and why sleep should be treated as a public health priority.



Sleep disorders are fast becoming one of India's most underdiagnosed health challenges, quietly fuelling hypertension, diabetes, mental health issues, and chronic fatigue across age groups. At the forefront

of tackling this crisis is Dr. Nagarajan Ramakrishnan — Founder of the Nithra Institute of Sleep Sciences, one of the country's earliest and most specialised centres for sleep health. In this conversation

with Corporate World, Dr. Ramakrishnan reflects on his unconventional journey from critical care to sleep medicine, the growing burden of sleep-related illnesses, and why India must urgently treat sleep as a public health priority.

Q. What inspired you to pursue medicine, and how did you find your passion in critical care and sleep medicine?

I often say I became a doctor by accident, though today I wouldn't change a thing. In the 1980s, I topped the country in Biology and secured admission to BITS Pilani for engineering. But due to financial constraints, my parents encouraged me to pursue medicine locally. At the time, I was disappointed, yet my father sensed I had the temperament and people skills suited to healthcare. Looking back, he was absolutely right. During my early training in the UK, I initially aimed to pursue cardiology, but realised that what truly fulfilled me was caring for critically ill patients rather than performing procedures. This led me to the University of Pittsburgh, one of the world's pioneering centres for critical care.

While practising intensive care, I began to see how unrecognised sleep disorders caused major health crises — heart attacks, strokes, depression, and cognitive decline. Families of ICU patients also suffered from disturbed sleep. This powerful connection between sleep

and critical illness is what drew me to sleep medicine, long before it gained recognition in India.

Q. You hold multiple board certifications across diverse specialties. What motivated you to develop such a wide range of expertise?

My career evolved in response to what I saw in real-world clinical settings. I began with internal medicine and then specialized in critical care because it allowed me to help patients at their most vulnerable moments. While treating ICU patients, I noticed a striking pattern: many had undiagnosed sleep disorders, especially sleep apnea, which contributed to chronic illnesses like hypertension, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. This led me to formally train in sleep medicine.

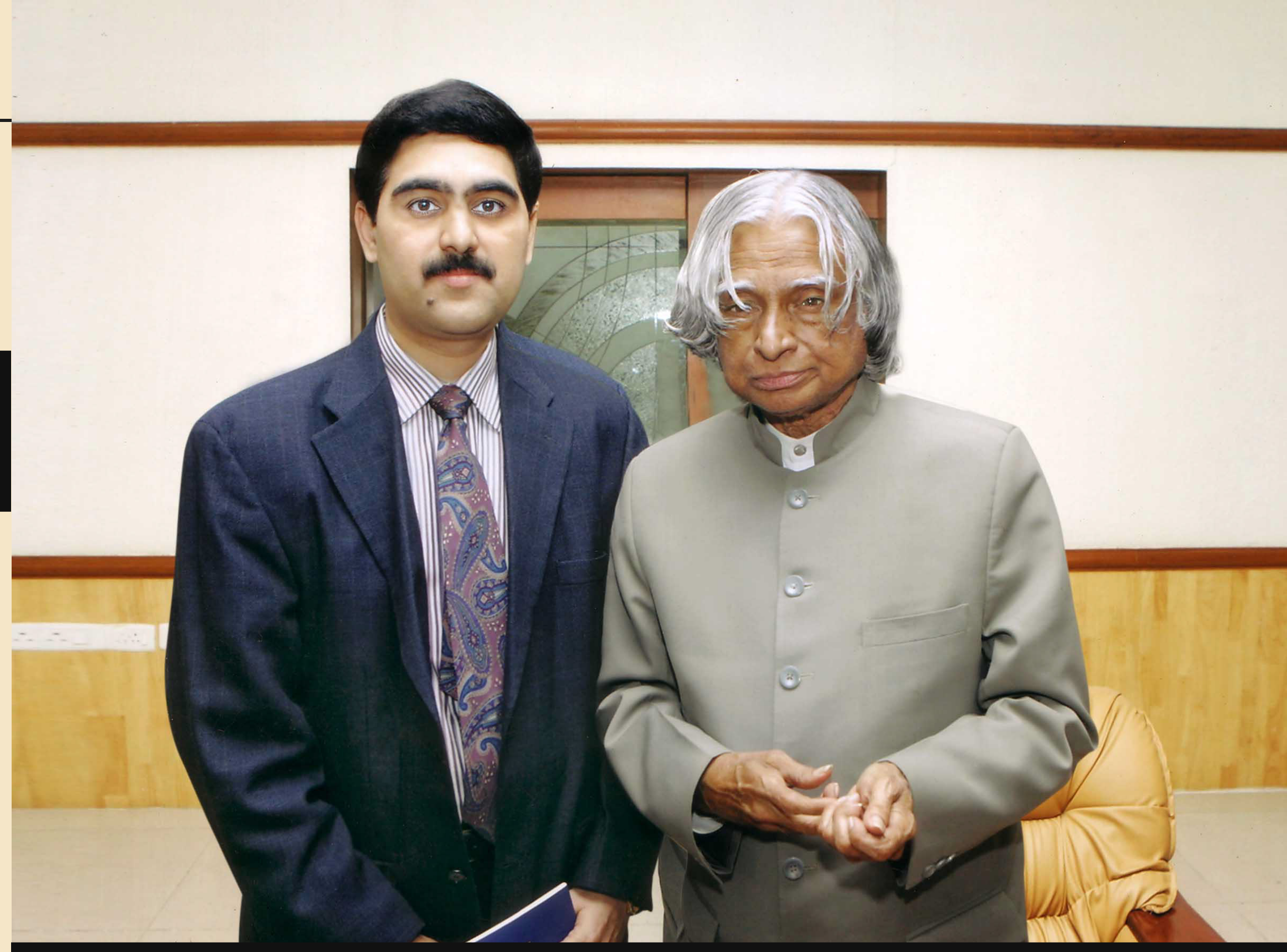
I later realised that obesity and sleep disorders were tightly intertwined — poor sleep could promote weight gain through hormonal changes, and obesity worsened sleep apnea. This synergy drew me into obesity medicine.

Finally, to understand healthcare beyond the clinical realm, I pursued a Masters Degree in Medical Management (MMM) in entrepreneurship at the prestigious University of Southern California Marshall School of Business. I wanted to bring global standards of sleep and critical care to India in a way that suits our population. Each qualification added a crucial layer to the holistic care I envisioned.

Q. What inspired you to establish the Nithra Institute of Sleep Sciences, and what vision guided the initiative?

When we launched Nithra in 2004, many questioned whether anyone would ever visit a "sleep specialist." Sleep medicine was virtually unheard of in India. Even my family wondered if returning from the US to start something so niche made sense. But I had seen first-hand how profoundly sleep disorders affected health and productivity. For many patients, simply diagnosing and treating sleep apnea or chronic insomnia could change — even save — their lives.

My vision for Nithra was clear: create a dedicated, evidence-based centre for sleep health, supported by trained specialists, sleep labs, psychology expertise, dietary guidance, and long-term follow-up. We started with one patient a week. Today, the challenge is the opposite — people complain about inability to get an early appointment at times! .



What keeps me motivated is knowing we are still seeing only the tip of the iceberg. India needs far more trained sleep specialists, but the awareness journey has firmly begun.

Q. Nithra offers expert consultation, testing, diagnosis, and customised treatment. What does a typical patient journey look like?

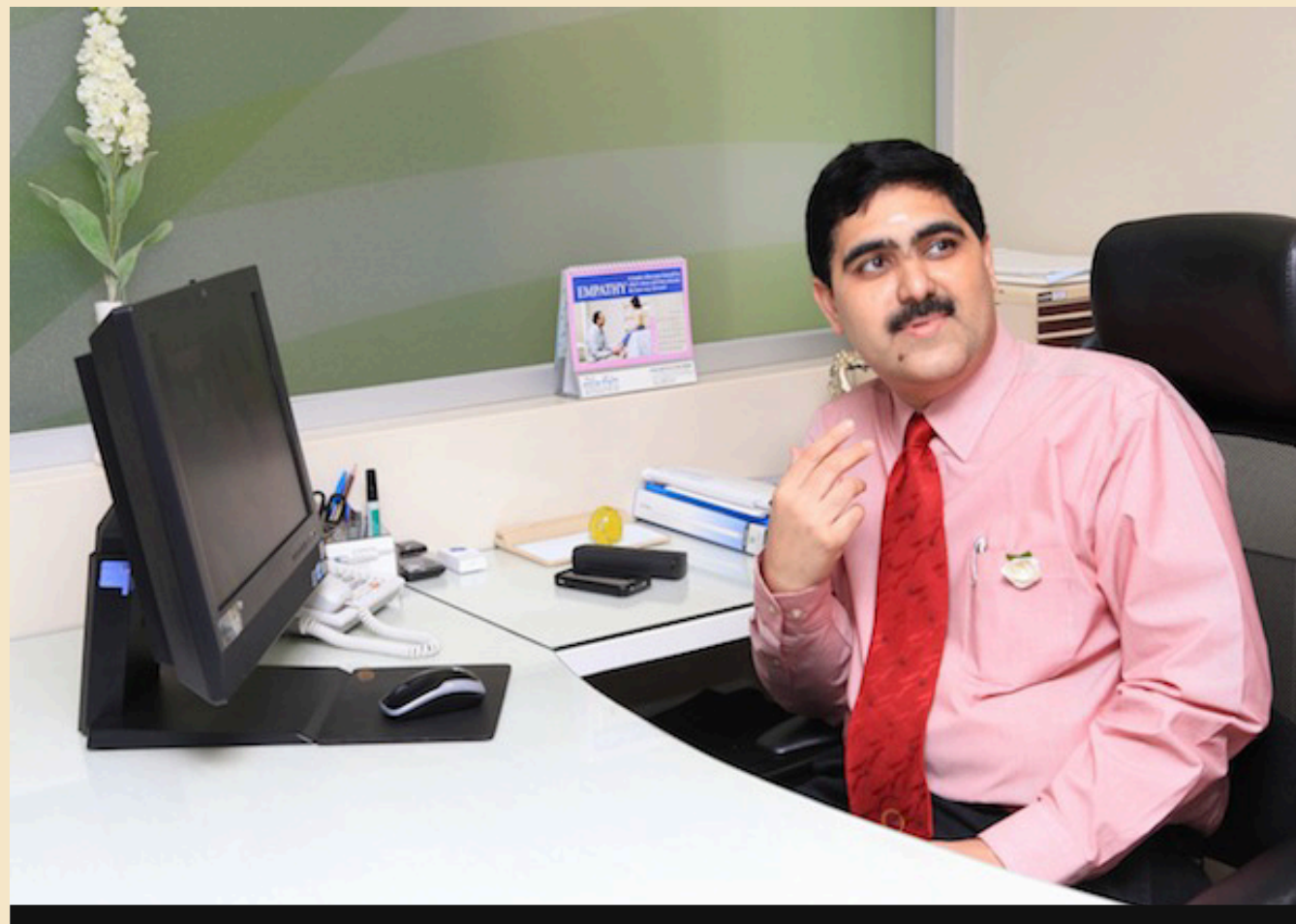
The journey begins with awareness — helping people understand that sleep issues include not just insomnia, but also excessive daytime sleepiness, sleepwalking, sleep talking, and sleep apnea. Modern work cultures, especially varying work times to provide services for other countries have created a chronically jet-lagged young population that needs structured guidance. We offer Corporate Sleep Health awareness programs and wish many more organizations engage us as it focuses on wellness, performance and productivity.

Once a patients visit us, we conduct a comprehensive screening involving physicians, psychologists, and dietitians. Based on their needs, we design a personalised plan — from sleep hygiene counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy to supervised medication when necessary. We strongly discourage self-medication, which is widespread in India.

If sleep apnea or other physiological disorders are suspected, we perform a detailed overnight sleep study in our home-like sleep labs. These studies measure sleep stages, oxygen levels, snoring patterns, body movements, heart-rate variability, and more.

Post-assessment, we provide a clear treatment plan and close follow-up. Teleconsultations have been especially valuable for national and international patients. Continuous support is the core of the patient experience at Nithra.

Q. Beyond clinical care, Nithra



played a key role in raising public awareness about sleep health. What strategies have worked best?

Awareness is at the heart of our mission. Social media has been an invaluable tool for breaking myths and sharing practical tips on sleep hygiene, early symptoms, and the dangers of untreated sleep disorders.

We regularly create videos, collaborate with media platforms, participate in discussions on Radio and Television, and engage with digital audiences to make sleep science accessible. Nithra also runs a Sleep Support Group — similar in spirit to Alcoholics Anonymous — where patients who have overcome chronic sleep issues share their experiences. This peer support helps others feel hopeful, understood, and motivated.

Beyond this, we contribute to print media, maintain a strong online presence, and publish educational books. I have authored four books in Tamil — One on ‘What happens inside an ICU’, Two on Sleep and another one to clarify myths on Organ donation. I hope some day, these could be translated in other languages. One of my Tamil books even reached the California Public Library, and a reader travelled all

the way from the US to consult us. This reaffirmed how far awareness can travel when communicated meaningfully.

Q. Finally, what message would you like to share with readers who are struggling to get a good night’s sleep?

Sleep is not a luxury It is a biological necessity. A good night’s sleep is essential to have a good day and healthy life. Lifestyle modifications focusing on sleep, nutrition and exercise can prevent the highly prevalent chronic health problems.

Many people think, “I don’t have diabetes, blood pressure or a heart problem; it’s just a sleep issue.” But untreated sleep problems can cause these very conditions. Prioritising sleep can protect your heart, metabolism, mental health, and overall well-being. I sincerely hope that World Health Organization enlists Sleep Disorders with these ‘Non-Communicable Disease (NCD)’ which are increasing and have been the focus in recent years.

If you’re struggling with sleep, don’t normalise it or ignore it. Qualified sleep specialists are available, and timely intervention can transform your quality of life. Remember: sleep is a priority, not an indulgence.

From Risk to Resilience: Embedding Compliance into Business Strategy

In today’s complex regulatory landscape, organizations are under increasing pressure to stay compliant while maintaining operational agility.

It’s about shifting the perception of compliance from being a reactive, risk-avoidance function to becoming a proactive, resilience-building driver of business strategy.

Embedding compliance into business strategy matters more than ever because compliance is no longer just about avoiding penalties—it’s about enabling resilience, trust, and sustainable growth.

Embedding compliance into business strategy is a strategic imperative for organizations to protect what matters most. This involves integrating compliance into business processes to build resilience, agility and trust. Organizations can achieve this by following a structured approach that combines regulatory insight, process expertise and smart technology. This approach ensures that compliance becomes a natural part of how the business runs, bridging gaps in traditional methods of embedding controls.

Risk-focused compliance (traditional view): Compliance is seen as a defensive mechanism.. The goal is to avoid fines, penalties, or reputational damage. Activities are often checklist-driven and siloed.

Resilience-focused compliance (modern view): Compliance is integrated into the core business strategy. It helps organizations adapt to regulatory changes, geopolitical shocks, and technological



Compliance processes help organizations withstand crises (cyberattacks, sanctions, financial shocks).

In the Indian stock market context, the theme “From Risk to Resilience: Embedding Compliance into Business Strategy” is highly relevant because compliance directly influences investor confidence, market stability, and long-term growth.

Companies that embed compliance into strategy demonstrate integrity, which attracts domestic and foreign investors. Transparent compliance reduces volatility caused by rumors or misinformation.

Embedding compliance into business strategy ensures smoother access to global capital markets.

Firms with resilient compliance frameworks can adapt quickly to regulatory changes, reducing operational and reputational risks. This stability translates into steadier stock performance.

In essence, In today’s dynamic environment, risk is inevitable—but resilience is a choice. By embedding compliance into business strategy, organizations transform regulatory obligations into strategic assets. This shift not only protects against penalties but also fosters investor confidence, strengthens ethical culture, and equips businesses to thrive amid uncertainty. As , the companies that will stand out in India’s markets and beyond are those that treat compliance as the backbone of resilience—turning challenges into opportunities and building a future where integrity drives sustainable success.

disruptions. Compliance becomes a source of trust, efficiency, and competitive advantage.

Key Elements of This Approach

• **Strategic Alignment:** Compliance frameworks are designed to support long-term business goals, not just regulatory requirements.

• **Culture of Integrity:** Embedding compliance into everyday decision-making fosters ethical, resilient teams.

• **Technology Integration:** Leveraging Regulatory Technology, AI, and automation to monitor risks and ensure agility.

• **Stakeholder Trust:** Transparent compliance builds credibility with regulators, investors, and customers.

• **Operational Resilience:**

Driving Growth and Financial Innovation in Healthcare

Prashant Goenka, Group CFO at NephroPlus, speaks to Corporate World about navigating the complexities of global financial management while driving strategic business expansion



The Group CFO at NephroPlus, Prashant Goenka is steering the company's financial strategy while driving growth across global operations. An MBA graduate from the Chicago Booth School of Business, he brings two decades of experience at HSBC, JP Morgan Chase, and Bank of America, having managed multi-million-dollar

budgets and led diverse teams across the USA, India, and the Philippines.

At NephroPlus, Goenka has built finance functions that combine accountability, transparency, and technology, transforming everyday financial operations into strategic tools for growth.

His approach emphasizes ROCE-accretive expansion, strategic capital allocation, and leveraging data analytics for predictive decision-making in the rapidly evolving healthcare sector.

He has also focused on cultivating high-performing teams, ensuring finance professionals are empowered to go beyond the numbers and contribute to broader business outcomes. Known for fairness and ethical leadership, Goenka aligns his teams with the company's mission while fostering a culture of innovation and operational excellence.

In this conversation, the dynamic leader speaks to Corporate World about navigating the complexities of global financial management while driving strategic business expansion.

Q. As Group CFO, how do you balance day-to-day financial management with long-term strategic expansion?

The key is to create a culture of accountability and trust, where teams take ownership of both numbers and outcomes. From there, I've focused on building strong foundations through technology automating reporting, analytics, and workflows to make the finance function system-driven rather than person-dependent. This ensures daily operations run seamlessly, freeing bandwidth for strategic priorities. With clear governance,

defined KPIs, and an analytical framework, we move from managing transactions to shaping direction. This allows me to stay deeply involved in expansion strategy—optimising capital allocation and ensuring every growth initiative drives long-term value creation.

Q. What are the key priorities in your roadmap to enhance NephroPlus's ROCE and overall financial strength?

Our focus is on disciplined, ROCE-accretive growth. We will continue expanding selectively in our core markets of India and the Philippines, where our model already demonstrates strong profitability. Every new clinic must meet our internal ROCE hurdle rate before capital is committed. Additionally, every few years we will explore entry into new geographies to diversify risk while preserving returns. Over the last three years, this disciplined approach has lifted our ROCE from near 0% to 23%, reflecting a balance between growth and efficiency. Strengthening working capital discipline, optimizing debt structures, and leveraging operational scale will remain central to sustaining financial resilience.

Q. In a healthcare business with strong operational demands, how do you ensure financial discipline while supporting rapid growth?

Maintaining discipline in healthcare starts with robust systems, processes, and a culture of accountability. We've implemented technology platforms that provide real-time visibility of performance metrics across our network, enabling swift, informed decisions. I believe in developing finance professionals who think like business partners, not just controllers. Combined with a razor-sharp focus on prioritizing growth opportunities, this ensures we scale responsibly, maintain compliance, and protect profitability

as we expand across diverse markets.

Q. How do you leverage technology and data analytics to make financial decisions more strategic and predictive?

At NephroPlus, we have an intentional bias toward embedding technology and data analytics in every financial process. Our priority is to organize, democratize, and monetize our data assets, ensuring decision-makers across levels have access to actionable insights. Through advanced analytics, we can identify BD opportunities, heat map centre performance and benchmark efficiencies. Our performance management system rewards data-driven decision-making and transparency, transforming finance from a retrospective to a predictive and strategic enabler.

Q. How do you ensure your leadership values are reflected in the culture of the finance division?

Culture is built through consistency between words and actions. By keeping things simple, being authentic, and walking the talk, I strive to make integrity and ownership tangible in every interaction. I focus on empowering talent—giving individuals the autonomy to lead initiatives that align with our broader mission. Open communication, meritocracy, and trust form the backbone of our finance culture, ensuring that our values are not just spoken, but practiced daily.

Q. What's your approach to developing high-performing

teams in a fast-paced, mission-driven healthcare environment?

High-performing teams thrive when clarity, empowerment, and purpose intersect. I prioritize creating systems that remove ambiguity clear priorities, structured processes, and transparent feedback. Beyond structure, I nurture a growth mindset and encourage teams to challenge assumptions. Every initiative must tie back to measurable impact and patient outcomes. By combining the rigor of process with the inspiration of purpose, we've built a finance function that's agile, entrepreneurial, and deeply aligned with our mission to make quality dialysis care accessible across Asia.

Q. What advice would you give to emerging finance leaders aspiring to transition from functional expertise to strategic leadership?

Shift your focus from activity to impact. Technical mastery is valuable, but leadership lies in driving outcomes—simplifying complexity, influencing strategy, and enabling teams to deliver measurable results. Declutter your mind and focus on a few high-impact priorities that truly move the organization forward. Cultivate an intentional sense of urgency to achieve key outcomes and have the courage to say no to distractions. Above all, build trust—because great finance leaders don't just interpret numbers; they empower people to use those numbers to shape meaningful change.

“When systems run the day-to-day, leaders can focus on shaping long-term growth.”



Leading with Purpose and Precision

Kumaresan Rajendran, Chairman and Managing Director, SNF India, on driving growth, innovation, and people-centric leadership in a rapidly changing industrial landscape

With over three decades of cross-industry and cross-border experience, Kumaresan Rajendran has built a distinguished career shaped by strategic foresight, operational excellence, and people-first leadership. As the Chairman and Managing Director of SNF India, he has been instrumental in positioning the company as one of the largest and most trusted production hubs within the global SNF Group. Under his stewardship, SNF India has achieved significant milestones — from large-scale capacity expansions to creating a culture of safety, sustainability, and continuous improvement.

In this candid conversation with Corporate World, Kumaresan Rajendran shares insights on his leadership journey, the evolution of the company, and his vision for building an agile, innovative, and globally aligned organisation.

Q. With over 30 years of experience across industries and geographies, how has your leadership philosophy evolved in navigating today's fast-changing business environment?

Having worked for over 30 years across multiple industries and geographies, my leadership philosophy has evolved from managing operations to inspiring transformation. Earlier, success meant achieving targets; today, it is about creating a culture where people are empowered to deliver excellence. The pace of change demands agility, empathy, and foresight. I believe in leading by example — being accessible, transparent, and fostering trust. At SNF India, we have built a performance-driven culture grounded in safety, customer focus, people development, and growth. The ability to adapt without losing core values has been central to my leadership approach in navigating today's dynamic business landscape.

Q. How do you balance strategic vision with

day-to-day execution, ensuring that teams stay aligned with long-term goals?

Balancing vision with execution requires clarity of purpose and strong communication. At SNF India, our long-term goals — sustainability, customer satisfaction, and operational excellence — are translated into actionable plans for every department. I ensure alignment through regular reviews, cross-functional meetings, and clear KPIs. While strategy provides direction, daily execution ensures momentum. Empowering managers to take ownership, yet holding them accountable, bridges the gap between planning and performance. I encourage open dialogue so teams understand why we do something, not just how. This alignment of vision and execution has been key to SNF India's consistent growth.

Q. How do you approach building a multi-geography business ecosystem — what

are the essentials for achieving consistency across diverse markets?

Building a successful multi-geography business demands consistency in values, flexibility in approach, and strong local leadership. At SNF, our global philosophy of 'Customer First' is uniform, but our execution adapts to local realities. The essentials lie in having robust systems, knowledge sharing, and a collaborative mindset. We maintain global standards in quality, safety, and ethics while empowering regional teams to innovate based on market dynamics. Regular global connect meetings and shared best practices ensure alignment across geographies. This combination of standardised processes and decentralised decision-making has enabled SNF India to thrive in a diverse and evolving market.

Q. What were some of the key milestones that shaped SNF



India's journey from its early days to becoming one of the largest production sites within the SNF Group?

SNF India began with a vision to support the country's growing demand for water treatment and allied polymer applications. Over the years, strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, and people have shaped our journey. Establishing one of the largest manufacturing facilities in the SNF Group was a major milestone. Continuous expansion in product lines — from water treatment to mining, textiles, and construction — reinforced our market leadership. The ₹500 crore expansion plan to double our capacity marks another defining chapter. Our unwavering focus on safety, customer trust, and employee development has been instrumental in positioning SNF India as a global benchmark.

Q. With over 300 employees, SNF India has built a strong and diverse workforce. How do you cultivate a culture of innovation and continuous improvement within your teams?

At SNF India, innovation is not limited to R&D — it's a mindset embedded in everyday work. We cultivate it through open communication, continuous learning, and empowerment. Every employee, whether on the shop floor or in management, is encouraged to question, suggest, and improve. We invest in capability development and cross-functional collaboration to strengthen creative thinking.

Recognising contributions and celebrating achievements fosters ownership. Continuous improvement is driven by our 'People and Growth' philosophy — developing talent, adopting new technologies, and streamlining processes. This inclusive culture of trust and accountability has been vital in sustaining SNF India's competitiveness and excellence.

Q. What are some of the upcoming projects or expansion plans that SNF India is focusing on?

SNF India is currently focused on its major expansion project of ₹500 crores to double production capacity, reinforcing our commitment to 'Make in India' and supporting growing domestic and export demand. This includes enhancing infrastructure, automation, and sustainable

manufacturing practices. We are also strengthening our presence across customer segments water treatment, construction chemicals, and mining with advanced product formulations.

Another focus is on digital transform and people capability enhancement to prepare for future challenges. Our aim is to make SNF India not only the largest but also the most efficient and environment responsible production hub within the SNF Group.



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Building a Globally Resilient Pharma Enterprise

“Mr. Zulfiqar Kamal, Director of Finance at ZIM Laboratories, speaks to Corporate World about leadership philosophy rooted in integrity, empowerment, and adaptability has steered the company’s evolution from a regional start-up to a globally recognized pharma entity.”



Few leaders have mastered the art of balancing financial discipline with transformative growth quite like Mr. Zulfiqar Kamal, Director of Finance at ZIM Laboratories, with more than four decades of experience in finance and management, he stands among the most respected financial architects in India’s pharmaceutical sector. Part of the founding team since 1989, Mr. Kamal has played a defining role in ZIM’s transformation from a regional start-up into a globally recognised, WHO-GMP and certified organisation operating across 50+ countries.

His leadership blends financial prudence with a forward-looking commitment to innovation. Under his strategic guidance, ZIM has expanded into high-margin, differentiated generic products backed by proprietary drug delivery systems such as Thinoral® and MECT. He has also been instrumental in leading complex business transformation initiatives—from cross-border expansions to building global operational hubs—while ensuring the strong financial frameworks required for R&D-driven growth in a highly regulated industry.

In this conversation with Corporate World, Mr. Kamal reflects on the principles that guide his leadership philosophy, the evolution of India’s pharmaceutical landscape, and the strategic pathways shaping ZIM Laboratories’ next phase of growth.

Q. You have a rich background in finance and management within the pharmaceutical industry. How has your journey shaped your leadership philosophy today?

Growing up in a large business family, I learned early the value of hard work, determination, and building meaningful relationships. My journey, from my articleship at Loya Bagri & Company to my long tenure as Director of Finance at ZIM Laboratories, has profoundly shaped my leadership philosophy. As Co-Promoter alongside Dr. Anwar

Balancing financial prudence with innovation has been fundamental to ZIM’s transformation. From the beginning, our mission has been to make high-quality healthcare accessible through patient-centric drug delivery solutions. Achieving this required establishing robust financial controls while investing extensively in R&D and manufacturing capabilities.

My approach ensures financial stability through risk mitigation, strategic cost controls, and disciplined financial management, creating a strong foundation for

team actions and organizational priorities, I ensure everyone understands our strategic direction and remains aligned with financial and business goals.

• **Collaboration and empowerment** – *I work to create an environment where individual expression is encouraged while maintaining focus on collective success.*

• **Financial discipline and compliance** – *Strengthening internal processes and regulatory adherence has been essential in establishing our WHO-GMP, and NSF/ANSI 455-2 certified facility.*

“From my experience, finance is far more than managing numbers, it is about enabling business strategy and long-term growth.”

Daud since 1989, I have witnessed firsthand how strategic vision and meticulous planning can refine internal processes, strengthen operational efficiency, and enhance compliance with stringent regulatory standards.

Today, my leadership philosophy centers on aligning actions with values, balancing personal integrity with the larger good, and pairing innovation with ethical responsibility. I believe progress lies in respectfully and thoughtfully improving others’ lives. The values of adaptability, integrity, and balance, instilled by my mentors and family, continue to guide my decision-making. I lead by empowering my team, fostering continuous learning, and maintaining clear communication, principles that have helped ZIM evolve from a home-grown entity into a globally recognized pharmaceutical organization.

Q. As Director of Finance, how do you balance financial prudence with innovation-driven growth?

innovation. We have reduced reliance on low-margin government contracts and exports, redirecting resources toward high-margin, differentiated products developed through our proprietary technologies such as Thinoral®, MECT, PCFT, RGDRT, and MAPOTAB.

My experience in cross-border transactions enabled the establishment of ZIM Laboratories Middle East DMCC in 2023 and the formation of joint ventures in Australia, further expanding our global presence across 50+ countries. Through rigorous market analysis and strategic risk management, I ensure that we pursue innovation with agility while maintaining operational stability and stakeholder value.

Q. What core principles guide your leadership approach at ZIM Laboratories?

My leadership at ZIM Laboratories is shaped by a few core principles:

• **Clear communication and alignment** – *By closely evaluating*

• **Integrity and emotional intelligence** – *These values guide every decision, reinforcing a culture built on stakeholder trust and long-term value.*

• **Continuous learning and innovation** – *Investing in team development and process improvements keeps us competitive and ensures innovation across our NIP and differentiated generics portfolio.*

Q. In a research-focused pharmaceutical company like ZIM Laboratories, what unique financial challenges and opportunities do you encounter?

At ZIM, the financial challenges are closely tied to our R&D-driven model. The primary challenge is balancing significant investments in innovative technologies with maintaining financial stability. Developing next-generation molecules designed to be first or second generics in targeted markets requires substantial capital expenditure, particularly for upgrading facilities to meet strict regulatory standards.

Ensuring financial discipline during our growth phase, while scaling globally, has been a central priority. Managing investments in our manufacturing infrastructure and reducing dependency on low-margin government contracts required advanced risk management and strategic capital allocation.

However, the opportunities are equally substantial. Our NIP pipeline, including eight filings and 12 OTF product registrations in the EU, holds immense value creation potential. These differentiated, higher-margin products attract strong interest from partners and investors, supporting entry into regulated markets such as the EU, Brazil, Australia, Canada, and South.

Q. You've been involved in business transformation projects. What's your approach to driving change while maintaining operational stability?

Business transformation requires balancing bold vision with practical execution. My early experiences taught me that lasting change occurs through incremental, well-planned steps rather than sweeping disruptions.

The foundation is thorough preparation and stakeholder alignment. Before implementing the integrated IT system connecting Quality, Finance, and Inventory functions, we invested considerable time in planning, piloting, and training to ensure teams understood both the "what" and the "why." During critical transition periods, we maintained parallel systems to safeguard daily operations. Financial stability anchors the transformation process. When establishing our WHO-GMP and NSF/ANSI 455-2 certified OTF facility, capital investments were phased to ensure each stage was financially sustainable. This approach allowed us to take calculated risks on innovation without jeopardizing operational continuity.



Similarly, during international expansions, such as launching ZIM Laboratories Middle East DMCC and forming our Australian joint venture, transparent communication and regular stakeholder updates minimized uncertainty and resistance. Transformation must build new capabilities without compromising core strengths. Throughout all initiatives, our commitment to quality and compliance remained unwavering, enabling sustainable growth while preserving operational excellence.

Q. What advice would you give to aspiring finance professionals in the industry?

From my experience, finance is far more than managing numbers, it is about enabling business strategy and long-term growth. The pharmaceutical sector requires professionals who combine financial rigor with an understanding of R&D-driven commercial realities. Master the fundamentals: financial controls, risk management, and regulatory compliance. In a sector where adherence to global standards

is essential and capital investments are substantial, strong financial frameworks determine organizational resilience. Skills in managing working capital, structuring cross-border transactions, and ensuring audit readiness form the bedrock of effective financial leadership.

Learn to balance short-term discipline with long-term value creation. Pharmaceutical development cycles are long, regulatory pathways complex, and market entry strategies nuanced, therefore, tools like scenario planning, sensitivity analysis, and capital budgeting are critical.

Stakeholder trust, across investors, regulators, and teams, is built through ethical decision-making and transparent communication. Above all, stay curious and adaptable. The industry evolves quickly, with shifting regulations and emerging technologies. Continuous learning ensures relevance, resilience, and sustained professional growth.

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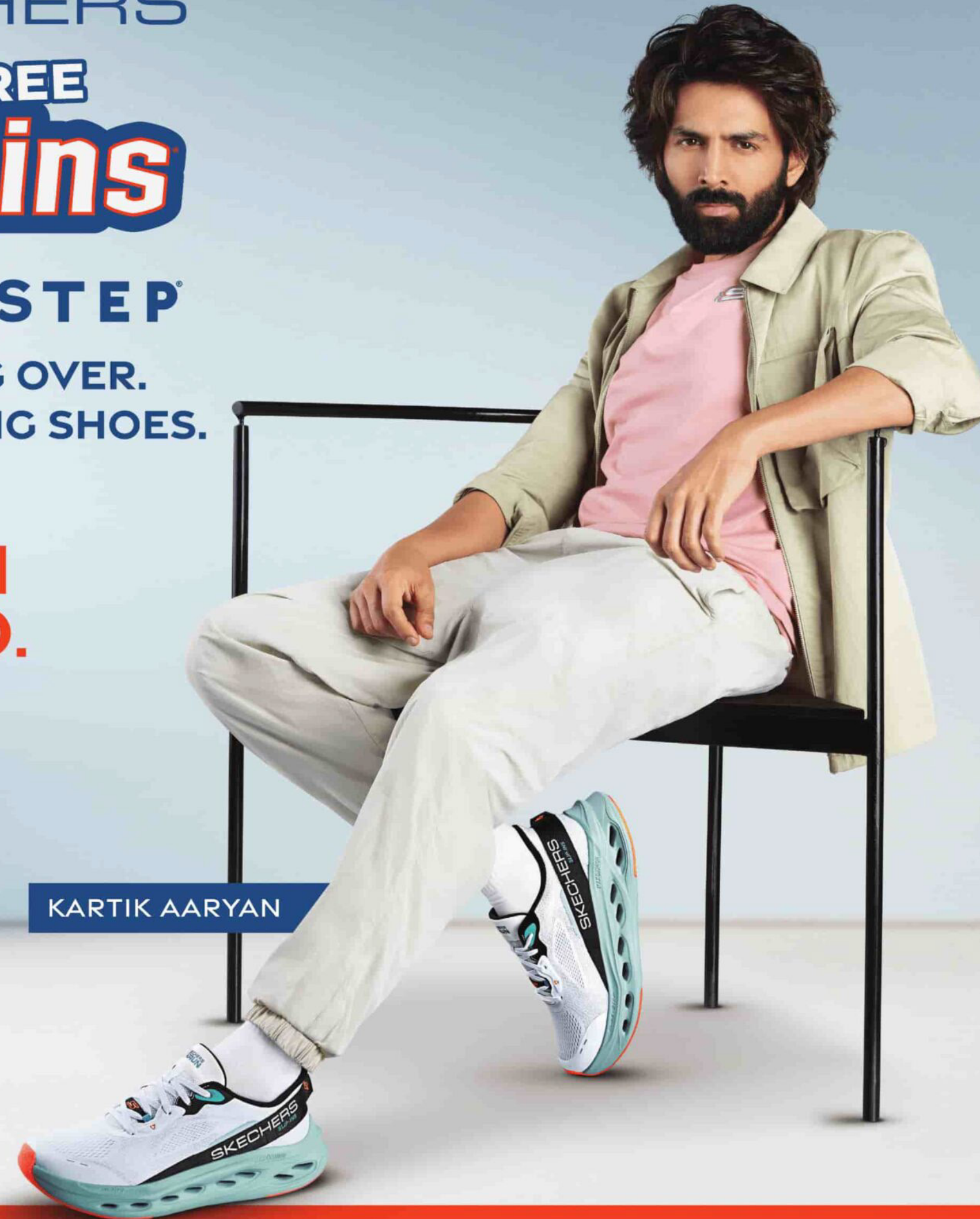
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India's Infrastructure Needs Digital Intelligence, Not Just Concrete



For decades, India's infrastructure has been measured in raw numbers: kilometers of highways built, megawatts of power generated, square feet of urban housing added. This obsession with physical scale has delivered progress, but it has also exposed a fundamental weakness. Assets built with outdated planning and management methods struggle to perform over time. Delays, cost overruns, maintenance failures and inefficiencies continue to plague projects that were meant to transform cities and rural economies alike.

The time has come for India to redefine what counts as progress. The next era of infrastructure will not be won by pouring more concrete. It will be shaped by how intelligently we integrate digital intelligence into the entire lifecycle

of infrastructure. Building Information Modeling, Geographic Information Systems, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Twins are not futuristic buzzwords. They are the new strategic backbone of planning, financing, operating and maintaining assets. The question is not whether India should adopt them. The real question is how quickly we can mainstream them before the cost of inaction becomes unbearable.

A Unified Source of Truth

Most Indian projects fail not for lack of ambition, but because of fragmented data and poor coordination. Contractors, financiers, policymakers, and engineers often work with inconsistent or outdated information. Building Information

Modeling offers a way out by creating a dynamic three-dimensional model that captures design, engineering, and construction details. When paired with Geographic Information Systems, which add contextual layers such as topography, climate, and population density, the result is a single source of truth for all stakeholders.

The Delhi Metro has already shown the benefits of such integration. By using BIM models in expansion phases and embedding GIS-based insights, planners were able to flag land acquisition challenges and environmental risks upfront. This reduced costly mid-course corrections and shortened the dispute cycle. Imagine the same methodology applied to the Mumbai Coastal Road or the ambitious high-speed rail corridor between Mumbai and Ahmedabad. Transparent, data-driven planning can prevent years of litigation and wasted capital.

From Guesswork to Prediction

Artificial Intelligence takes this further by transforming infrastructure from reactive to predictive. Instead of fixing potholes after they appear, AI can forecast where maintenance will be required and schedule interventions before the damage escalates. It can model future power demand in cities, optimize water distribution in drought-prone districts, and simulate how traffic flows will evolve with population growth.

Bengaluru's traffic police have piloted AI-based signal optimization systems to reduce congestion. While small in scale, these pilots reveal a larger truth. Cities can extract better performance from existing assets

without endlessly adding new lanes, flyovers, or metro lines. For a country where infrastructure funding is always constrained, the ability to sweat assets harder through prediction rather than expansion is a decisive advantage.

Infrastructure as a Living System

Digital Twins represent the most transformative leap. They create real-time digital replicas of physical assets. Once deployed, they allow managers to test scenarios, monitor performance, and identify vulnerabilities in a safe virtual environment.

Bangalore International Airport has embraced this technology by developing a digital twin to manage passenger flows, energy use, and security operations. The system allows operators to anticipate bottlenecks, reroute traffic, and reduce downtime. The impact on efficiency and customer experience is visible to every traveller passing through the terminal. Now imagine the same capability embedded into India's ports, or water networks. Such systems could not only improve performance but also build resilience against climate shocks, cyber risks, and demand surges.

The Capital at Stake

India plans to invest over 1.4 trillion dollars in infrastructure over the next decade under the National Infrastructure Pipeline. The figure is staggering, but the bigger concern is not how much will be spent but how well it will be spent. If twentieth century methods continue to guide twenty first century investments, India risks locking in inefficiencies for the next fifty years.

Digital adoption is not an additional cost. It is an insurance policy on efficiency. By embedding BIM, GIS, AI, and Digital Twins into projects, India can minimize delays, reduce litigation, extend asset life, and improve citizen outcomes. The

return on investment is obvious. The cost of ignoring these tools will be measured not only in wasted rupees but in lost opportunities for growth.

Policy Must Lead the Way

Private sector innovators are already experimenting with these technologies. Startups are developing AI-based traffic models, engineering firms are adopting BIM, and airports are testing digital twins. But adoption cannot remain fragmented. It requires a decisive policy framework.

The government should set digital-first standards for all public works above a certain threshold. Just as the Goods and Services Tax unified India's fragmented indirect tax regime, digital standards can unify the design, procurement, and management of infrastructure. Public procurement policies should reward bidders who demonstrate advanced digital integration. State-level agencies must be trained in digital project management. Data generated by public assets should be treated as a national resource, with open access frameworks that enable collaboration between government, academia, and industry.

India's Smart Cities Mission provided a start by creating data platforms for urban management. The next step is to institutionalize platforms for urban management. The next step is to institutionalize BIM, GIS, AI, and Digital Twins across every sector, from rural water supply to renewable energy. A clear digital mandate from the top will create economies of scale and lower the cost of adoption for all stakeholders.

The Politics of Accountability

There is also a political dimension.

Infrastructure in India is often equated with ribbon cuttings and grand announcements. The focus remains on what is built rather than how it performs. Digital technologies change this equation. They make performance measurable in real time. They create accountability that extends beyond the inauguration ceremony.

When citizens can see whether a road remains pothole-free, whether a metro runs on schedule, or whether water supply reaches their homes as promised, political narratives will shift. Leaders who embrace digital-first infrastructure will not only build better assets but also build stronger trust with the public. In a democracy as vibrant as India's, that trust is a currency more powerful than any budget allocation.

Building to Last

India's infrastructure challenges are immense. Urbanization is accelerating. Climate risks are intensifying. Financing gaps remain stubborn. But the solution cannot be to merely build more of the same. The solution is to build differently. BIM, GIS, AI are more than acronyms. They are instruments of accountability, efficiency, and resilience. By embedding them into the DNA of infrastructure planning and delivery, India can shift from chasing physical scale to creating lasting value.

The nation has reached a decisive moment. The trillions committed to infrastructure over the next decade will either become a burden of inefficiency or a foundation for prosperity. The difference will be determined not by the number of projects announced but by the intelligence with which they are executed. India must make the choice now.

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KFSHRC's Robotic Revolution

Dr. Majid Alfayyadh on the Future of Precision Surgery in Saudi Arabia



At a time when global healthcare systems are racing toward smarter, more precise, and patient-centric care, King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Centre (KFSHRC) is emerging as one of the region's most compelling success stories. The hospital's transformation has been years in the making, but a recent milestone—shared by Dr. Majid Alfayyadh, Chief Executive Officer of KFSHRC—captures just how far the institution has evolved.

Speaking at the FII PRIORITY Asia Summit in Tokyo, Dr. Alfayyadh revealed that around seven percent of all surgeries at KFSHRC are now performed using robotic systems. It is a number that signals more than operational progress; it reflects a new era in the hospital's approach to care—one where technology and human expertise come together to deliver safer procedures and better outcomes.

A Shift That Puts Patients First

Robotic surgery is not new to KFSHRC, but its rapid expansion in recent years has been intentional shared that the impact of adopting robotic platforms has already been transformative. Patients are experiencing fewer complications, spending less time in the hospital, and facing lower risks of infection. Surgeons, in turn, benefit from enhanced precision, stability, and

visibility during even the most complex procedures.

For a hospital that treats some of the most challenging cases in the Kingdom, these improvements mean everything. They reshape the patient journey—from surgery to recovery—and reinforce the hospital's mission to offer world-class care for the people of Saudi Arabia and beyond.

"Robotic surgery is increasingly becoming a primary option in our operating rooms," Dr. Alfayyadh noted, emphasizing the growing confidence and adoption among KFSHRC's surgical teams.

Breakthroughs That Redefine Possibilities

KFSHRC's growing expertise in robotic surgery has already led to remarkable achievements. Dr. Alfayyadh pointed to a groundbreaking moment: the hospital's first robotic-assisted removal of a brain tumor using 3-D mapping technology. This milestone demonstrates the extraordinary precision that next-generation surgical platforms can bring to procedures traditionally associated with high risk.

For patients and their families, these breakthroughs bring hope—hope for

Regional Pride

KFSHRC's efforts have earned it global recognition. The hospital has been ranked:

- #1 in the Middle East and North Africa
- #15 globally among the world's top 250 academic medical centers (2025)

The most valuable healthcare brand in the region, according to Brand Finance

Featured in Newsweek's World's Best Hospitals 2025, Best Smart Hospitals 2026, and Best Specialized Hospitals 2026

"Around seven percent of all surgeries at KFSHRC are now performed using robotic systems. It is a number that signals more than operational progress; it reflects a new era in the hospital's approach to care."

Part of a Bigger Picture: A Hospital Stepping Into the Future

KFSHRC's advancement in robotic surgery is not happening in isolation. It is part of a broader, future-focused strategy designed to strengthen the hospital's global competitiveness while meeting evolving national healthcare needs. Dr. Alfayyadh highlighted four key areas that define this transformation:

- Biotechnology
- Genomics
- Digital health
- Advanced surgical innovation

Each of these areas plays a role in reshaping how patients are diagnosed, treated, and cared for. Together, they form the backbone of KFSHRC's ambition to build one of the world's most advanced healthcare models—one that competes not only regionally but on the global stage.

safer surgeries, quicker recovery, and a better chance at long-term healing. For the Kingdom, they mark progress toward becoming a global destination for cutting-edge medical care.

A Vision Rooted in Innovation and Human Care

Although the technology is impressive, Dr. Alfayyadh is clear about one thing: robotic systems are tools—powerful ones—but still tools designed to enhance human skill, not replace it. At KFSHRC, technology serves a single purpose: to improve the lives of patients. This human-centered approach is at the heart of the hospital's long-term vision. As KFSHRC expands its robotic capabilities, trains its surgeons, and strengthens its research base, it continues to prioritize safety, compassion, and clinical excellence.

A Global Leader With

These rankings affirm what Dr. Alfayyadh and the hospital's teams work toward every day: delivering healthcare that matches, and often exceeds, international standards.

Shaping the Future of Saudi Healthcare

As KFSHRC continues its journey, the message from Dr. Majid Alfayyadh is clear: innovation is not optional—it is essential. Robotic surgery is just one chapter in a larger story of how the hospital is redefining care, pushing boundaries, and investing in technologies that make a real difference in people's lives.

With a growing portfolio of robotic procedures, landmark surgical accomplishments, and a bold vision for the future, KFSHRC stands today not only as a regional leader but as a symbol of what Saudi Arabia's healthcare future can look like: precise, innovative, compassionate, and globally competitive.

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