



SANJAY BORADE

## Holistic homes

To encourage budding architects, Birla White organises Birla White YuvaRatna Awards. Attending this year's award function – the 9th edition – **Rajashree Birla**, chairperson, **The Aditya Birla Centre for Community Initiatives and Rural Development** said, "One in every three urban Indians is homeless, more than 50 million families do not have a decent roof over their head in India. So, I feel heartened that 'affordable housing township and healthcare centre within township' was selected as a theme for architects this year. Designing a housing township that is holistic, sustainable and in a certain way an invocation of space, offers tremendous potential for the imagination of the young." Impressed by the designs submitted by participating students, Birla complimented the winners for creating sustainable design concepts that were both fascinating and creative. ♦

## Clay as ornament



Chennai-based **Malini Kalyanam** gave up her career as head of HR at Ansaldo Caldaie Boilers, an Italian holding currently under the Gammon group, to become a potter. Malini's father, V. Kalyanam, 91, was Mahatma Gandhi's secretary during his last years after the latter's release from jail in 1944 till his death in 1948. In fact, it was his love for gardening that propelled Kalyanam to quit her job and go to Gandhiji's ashram in

## Art gathering

**Pravina** and **Jamal Mecklai** recently celebrated 14 years of their art gallery, **Jamaat**, located in Mumbai. At the event, they showcased a number of paintings of veteran artist, **Prabhakar Kolte**. "If



## Tech village

An IIT on the one hand, a training centre for model village development on the other – a group of Pune-based architects has won competitions to design both. Says **Madhav Hundekar**, director of the 22-year-old architectural firm **Mitimitra**, "We have created a niche for ourselves by consciously restricting our focus in designing environmentally sustainable institutional projects." This focus is winning them laurels: Hundekar and his fellow architects **Makarand Godbole**, **Madhura Mulay** and **Vikram Hundekar** are now designing IIT, Gandhinagar's academic area, a project they bagged through



a competition among architects from all over India. The campus, to be set up at Palej village on 160 hectares, will have three major parts

Sewagram. But Malini is no Gandhian. After her MBA from a US university, Malini joined an MNC in Bangalore. "One day, I saw a woman, in her early 40s, giving a demonstration of her work of art on a potter's wheel in

a shopping mall in Bangalore. I asked her if she would teach me pottery. She agreed and my love and passion for pottery grew as I kept on learning from her," she says. Through her personal Website, [www.malinipottery.com](http://www.malinipottery.com).

you can be the vehicle that encourages good art, there's nothing like it," says Pravina. "I've been looking at art since I was six years old, and buying it since I was sixteen," she adds. Jamaat, named after Pravina's father at Jamal's suggestion, means gathering, and that is exactly what it has been through the years. "I wanted it to be a meeting place of ideas, art, discussions, and I'm delighted that we have been able to do that. We have had numerous workshops, talks, discussions, musical performances, dramas and book launches, so it really has been a gathering place." In the future, Pravina plans to contribute more to art education through talks and discussions. ♦

## A night to remember

Last fortnight saw the unveiling of a coffee table book on the illustrious Rambagh Palace Hotel, Jaipur. Home to the late Rajmata Maharani Gayatri Devi, the palace was later converted into a hotel when Indian Hotels Company (IHC) took over its management in 1971. Authored by **Dharmendra Kanwar**, the book chronicles the palace's 177 year journey; of bespoke sapphires and diamonds, martini-soaked lunches, grand levees and the opulence generally associated with a palace and its royalty. Present at the launch were **Maharaja Jai Singh** of Jaipur and **Raymond Bickson**, MD and CEO, IHC, who unveiled the book. **Rani Vidya Devi** and **Rajkumar Vijit Singh** were also



present, among other eminent personalities. "The late Rajmata always wanted someone to write a book on the Rambagh Palace. A few years after she passed away, Satyajit Krishnan, GM of the Rambagh Palace Hotel approached me with the idea of writing a

book on it," says Kanwar, who was closely associated with the late Maharani. Also on display were rare, limited edition photographs of the Maharani as a special tribute to her. Maharaja Jai Singh recalled many fond memories spent as a child in the palace. ♦



Prakash Jadhav

presentations. Mitimitra's design solution for a lecture theatre complex, laboratories, recreational space, canteens and exhibition spaces, has a promenade along the Sabarmati river, which they describe as a unique concept of development of an educational 'spine' – a hub of activities for the entire campus. "Our backs were patted the second time around when we won the design competition organised on behalf of the Maharashtra government, bagging the contract for a one-of-its-kind training centre at Hivare Bazaar in the Ahmednagar district, which is planned to facilitate the study of this bazaar as a role model in rural development," Hundekar adds. ♦

– academic buildings, housing for staff and hostels for students – for all of which the eight firms shortlisted from the original 50 had to submit

com, and through various social networking sites, Malini has managed to attract buyers for her pottery from Europe, the US and Southeast Asian countries. Malini, who also actively takes part in various social

work programmes, wants to teach pottery to poor women in association with some not-for-profit organisations so that they can earn their livelihood by making and selling pottery for fashion conscious buyers. ♦



**Sweet success**  
She has been stung by honey bees an astounding 2,800 times but that has not dampened her entrepreneurial spirit. **Josephine Selvaraj**, the founder of **Vibis Natural Bee Farm**, based in Vadipatti near Madurai in Tamil Nadu, was recently awarded the 20th Jankidevi Bajaj Puraskar along with a cash prize of ₹3,00,000 at the Indian Merchants' Chamber in recognition of her contribution towards rural upliftment and business entrepreneurship. "I started off with 10 honey bee boxes, now I have 5,000," states Selvaraj proudly. She has also been responsible for spreading the art of bee-keeping among other emerging rural entrepreneurs which include hospital staff, school and college students and even prisoners from the Madurai Central Jail. "Without the aid of NGOs, foreign funds, or black money, I have given free bee-farming training to 50,000 emerging entrepreneurs," she shares. ♦