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Ahead Of The Curve, Ahead Of Growth

Developers who anticipated infrastructure development and embraced sustainability early are emerging as long-term leaders in India's housing markets.



As the world marks World Environment Day today (June 5), sustainability is no longer just a corporate commitment or a regulatory requirement, it is increasingly shaping where and how India's cities grow. In the country's housing market, the biggest winners today are not necessarily the largest developers, but those who recognised early that long-term value would be created at the intersection of infrastructure expansion, environmental responsibility and future-ready urban development.

A recent Colliers report underscores a trend that is becoming increasingly visible across the country's residential landscape: developers who anticipated infrastructure-led growth opportunities and embedded sustainability into their projects are now best positioned for long-term leadership. As metro lines, expressways, airports and commercial hubs reshape urban geographies, real estate value is being created long before demand becomes obvious, while environmental considerations are emerging as critical differentiators for future-ready communities.

Across cities such as Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, MMR, Pune, Chennai and even lifestyle destinations like Goa, infrastructure has emerged as a powerful catalyst for residential demand. Yet, industry leaders believe connectivity alone is no longer enough. Sustainability, wellness and quality of life are becoming equally critical in determining the future relevance of residential developments. *"The landscape of Indian realty has fundamentally shifted,"* says Murali Malayappan, CMD, Shriram Properties Limited. According to him, the most successful developers are those who understand how cities evolve and position themselves accordingly. In markets such as Bengaluru, Chennai and Pune, projects located near upcoming metro corridors, ring roads and technology hubs are witnessing stronger returns today because developers identified these growth drivers early. Malayappan

adds that while connectivity remains a key pillar, sustainable and green development practices are now essential to creating resilient housing and long-term value.

Market data reinforces this trend. According to Santhosh Kumar, Vice Chairman, Anarock Group, cities such as Hyderabad, Bengaluru and MMR, where metro expansions, IT corridor growth and expressway development were anticipated early, have consistently outperformed in both residential demand and price appreciation. He notes that developers who aligned project launches with these infrastructure pipelines while integrating sustainability into their developments are now benefiting from stronger sales velocity, premium pricing and greater buyer trust in an increasingly end-user-driven market.

"While connectivity remains a key pillar, sustainable and green development practices are now essential to creating resilient housing and long-term value."

— Murali Malayappan, CMD, Shriram Properties Ltd.

Echoing this view, Sumit Sapru, CEO, Shapoorji Pallonji Real Estate, says infrastructure has emerged as one of the strongest indicators of future housing demand in India. Developers who identified opportunities around emerging business districts, metro corridors and expressways ahead of the market are today witnessing stronger absorption, sustained appreciation and deeper consumer confidence.

This trend is particularly evident in Delhi-NCR, where infrastructure investments have transformed several micro-markets into residential hotspots. Sandeep Chhillar, Founder and Chairman, Landmark Group, points to the Dwarka Expressway as one of the most compelling examples of how infrastructure can reshape both residential demand and investment sentiment. Once viewed as an emerging corridor, the region has evolved into one of the NCR's most sought-after residential destinations, supported by enhanced connectivity, commercial activity and large-scale urban development.

"The Dwarka Expressway as a prime example of how infrastructure can transform an emerging corridor into one of the region's most aspirational residential destinations."

— Sandeep Chhillar, Founder & Chairman, Landmark Group

Similarly, Mitul Jain, MD, SPJ Group, observes that locations such as Old Gurgaon are witnessing renewed interest due to infrastructure upgrades and improved social infrastructure. According to him, today's homebuyers evaluate not only the quality of residences but also how seamlessly a location integrates with their long-term lifestyle aspirations. Open spaces, efficient planning and community-oriented development are becoming increasingly important considerations.

The phenomenon is not limited to NCR. In Hyderabad, infrastructure-driven growth is shaping demand across emerging corridors such as Shamshabad and Patancheru. Kirthi Chilukuri, Founder and MD, Stonecraft Group, shares that connectivity improvements, social infrastructure and planned urban development are creating strong residential demand in these locations. However, he believes future-ready development must extend beyond location advantages and create ecological value as well. Projects which integrate green spaces

and environmental stewardship alongside modern infrastructure are likely to deliver stronger long-term investment potential.

“Future-ready development must combine location advantages with ecological value, creating communities that balance modern infrastructure with sustainable living.”

— Kirthi Chilukuri, Founder & MD, Stonecraft Group

Bengaluru offers another powerful example of how infrastructure and economic growth work together to create real estate opportunities. According to Darshan Govindaraju, Executive Director, Vaishnavi Group, infrastructure projects such as metro expansions, flyovers, industrial hubs and expressways are unlocking billion-dollar opportunities across new micro-markets. Areas such as Yelahanka, Devanahalli, Jalahalli and Banashankari demonstrate how early investments aligned with infrastructure development can generate substantial returns. As the city continues to attract global corporations, entrepreneurs and skilled professionals, the need for well-planned residential development is only expected to grow.

“Infrastructure projects in Bengaluru such as metro expansions, flyovers, industrial hubs and expressways are unlocking billion-dollar opportunities across new micro-markets.”

— Darshan Govindaraju, Executive Director, Vaishnavi Group

Developers with a presence across multiple cities are witnessing similar patterns. Ramji Subramaniam, MD, Sowparnika Projects, says emerging micro-markets across South India have consistently attracted strong buyer interest. Many of these locations have recorded price appreciation of 25-30 percent in recent years, drawing both end-users and investors. Cities such as Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai continue to see strong demand in suburban clusters located near employment hubs and infrastructure corridors.

The emphasis on sustainability is emerging as a common thread across these markets. Homebuyers today are significantly more informed and environmentally conscious than they were a decade ago. Rising utility costs, resource constraints and growing awareness of environmental issues are influencing purchase decisions. *"Homebuyers are increasingly evaluating a project based on its ability to offer long-term sustainability, operational efficiency and healthier living environments,"* says Subramaniam. Buyers are seeking homes which not only reduce maintenance costs but also support responsible living and long-term asset appreciation.

Sustainability, industry leaders argue, is no longer a parallel consideration but a core component of long-term value creation. Shabeg Singh, Director, AIPL, believes responsible development today must encompass efficient water management, energy-conscious design, walkability, green spaces and resilient infrastructure. As urbanisation accelerates, he says developers have both an opportunity and a responsibility to create projects that are economically viable, environmentally responsible and capable of serving future generations.

Sapru adds that infrastructure-led growth is no longer solely about connectivity. Long-term value creation increasingly depends on liveability, wellness, green spaces and the broader ecosystem that develops around a project. Developments that successfully balance

infrastructure-driven growth with environmental sensitivity, he says, are likely to generate enduring value for both residents and investors.

Industry data suggests this shift is becoming increasingly mainstream. Payas Agarwal, Director, Great Value Realty, points out that India has become one of the world's largest green building markets, with more than 19,000 registered green building projects. According to him, future-ready developments will be those that successfully combine infrastructure-driven accessibility with sustainable design principles that enhance livability and operational efficiency.

The growing importance of wellness is further reshaping buyer expectations. Abhishek Jain, COO, Group Satellite, notes that residential demand in metro-adjacent corridors has risen significantly over the last few years, but location alone no longer determines purchasing decisions. Wellness-focused amenities and healthier living environments have become major differentiators, with projects integrating such features often commanding better price realisation. In his view, the intersection of infrastructure foresight and wellness-led design is redefining residential benchmarks across the country.

For large-scale residential developers, this evolution is changing the very definition of market leadership. Reeza Sebastian Karimpanal, Chief Revenue Officer (Residential), Embassy Developments Ltd., is of the view that future leadership will depend less on scale and more on the ability to anticipate how cities evolve. Connectivity, commercial expansion and social infrastructure remain important demand drivers, but sustainability and quality of life are increasingly influencing both consumer preferences and investment decisions.

Infrastructure investments themselves continue to provide a strong foundation for this transformation. Geetanjali Khanna, MD, ReaRco, highlights that government capital expenditure on infrastructure and the rapid expansion of metro networks, logistics hubs and transportation corridors are unlocking latent demand across both established metropolitan regions and emerging cities. Historically, infrastructure projects have boosted nearby residential and commercial property values by as much as 15-30 percent, reinforcing the importance of strategic positioning.

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— Reeza Sebastian Karimpanal, CRO (Residential), Embassy Developments Ltd.

Yet, some industry leaders caution against viewing infrastructure as the sole driver of long-term value. Varun Nagpal, Founder and CEO, Vianaar, argues that enduring demand emerges when infrastructure is complemented by thoughtful development that reflects changing lifestyle aspirations. Goa, he says, demonstrates how improved connectivity combined with a desire for low-density living, walkable neighbourhoods and stronger connections with nature can create lasting value beyond immediate appreciation.

From an investment standpoint, the market is also witnessing a shift in how value is assessed. Binitha Dalal, Founder and MD, Mt. K Kapital, notes that infrastructure is increasingly

influencing capital allocation decisions, with investors favouring micro-markets that demonstrate sustained economic activity, transit-led expansion and long-term growth visibility. According to her, assets positioned around integrated infrastructure ecosystems are proving more resilient across market cycles, offering stronger monetisation potential and superior long-term valuation outcomes.

The next phase of industry leadership, experts believe, will belong to developers capable of combining infrastructure foresight with disciplined execution. As Singh notes, the most enduring success stories will emerge from projects that remain relevant, resilient and sustainable for decades, while evolving alongside the cities they help shape.

Ultimately, the Colliers report highlights a broader reality reshaping Indian real estate. Infrastructure may determine where growth begins, but sustainability, wellness and quality of life increasingly determine whether that growth endures.

As Avneesh Sood, Director, Eros Group, aptly puts it, infrastructure is no longer merely a future opportunity, it has become a measure of who understood the future first. The developers reaping the greatest rewards today are those who invested ahead of roads, metros, airports and emerging employment hubs, creating value before demand became visible.

In India's next phase of residential growth, the formula for leadership is becoming clear: anticipate urban transformation early, build sustainably, and create communities designed not just for today's buyers, but for the cities of tomorrow.