

# Dream Project

How the Narsi Group fitted and furnished the interiors of India's New Parliament Building in New Delhi



Members of Parliament, diplomats and visitors attend the historic inaugural session of the New Parliament Building, in New Delhi, in May 2023.

Parliament pics: Press Information Bureau. Other images: Narsi Interior Infrastructure.

## DHANANJAY SARDESHPANDE

In what is being described as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, several woodworking entities came together in recent years to help the Union government construct and furnish the New Parliament Building (NPB), which was inaugurated by India's Prime Minister in May 2023.

The NPB has a hexagonal shape, is located next to the older Parliament House, is designed to be resistant to earthquakes, and has been constructed to last at least 150 years. According to the Central Vista

Redevelopment Project's estimate, it cost 971 crore to make.

A platinum-rated 'green' building, the total built-up area of the NPB is 20,866 square metres, comprising of a lower ground floor, upper ground floor, first floor and an upper floor.

The Central Vista Redevelopment Project is being run by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and executed by the Central Public Works Department (CPWD). The principal architect was the Ahmedabad-based HCP Design, Planning and Management Pvt.Ltd., led by Bimal Patel.



According to Narsi Kularia, Managing Director of Narsi Interior Infrastructure, his Mumbai-based company bagged the contract from Tata Projects Ltd. in January 2021, for making all furniture and interior woodwork and furnishing, covering approximately 68,810 square metres.

### Project scope

This involved the interiors package of providing doors and windows, wood panelling, drywall partitions, light-weight MS structure of panelling, ceiling and curvature framework, wooden false ceiling, gypsum false ceiling and painting work. The wood panelling in all interiors extended from the floor to the ceiling.

The loose furniture comprised tables and benches for 674 Lok Sabha and 392 Rajya Sabha MPs. More furniture – in the form of chairs, sofas, centre and side tables – was manufactured and installed to equip 30 ministers' offices on each floor, staff offices, library, dining halls, committee rooms, lounges and lobbies.

Seating and tables were also separately manufactured and installed for the Prime Minister's Office, apart from the galleries of both Houses of Parliament, including those for diplomats, the press and the public.

The contract stipulated seven huge wooden panel fire-rated doors and veneer or laminate finish fire doors with vision panels. These doors also feature wood carving. The two central courtyards have conference

facilities, VIP dining halls and a ladies lounge each, adding up to a seating capacity of more than 300 people each.

For Narsi, a highlight was the construction and installation of the huge (5.8x 5.8-metre) carved wooden *jalis* (grilles) suspended 18.5 metres from the floors of the Lok Sabha (peacock theme) and Rajya Sabha (lotus theme). These are designed to harvest natural light to illuminate the two chambers.

### Action plan

According to Narsi his company employed approximately 950 people at the site in New Delhi, while 600 people were exclusively assigned the NPB work at the factory in Turbhe, Navi Mumbai.

The completion of the project was planned floor-wise, starting from the lower and upper ground floors, ministers' chambers, and first and second floors. The lower ground floor is the busiest, with staff offices, kitchens, store rooms, and conference centres.

Each of the offices has wooden doors and windows, awainscot, perforated ceiling and white paint. The central foyer and corridor



*As work progressed, the plans, designs, shop drawings and prototypes were vetted, tested and approved by teams from the principal architect, HCP Design, and officials of the Central Public Works Department.*



ceiling are finished in an aluminium open-cell ceiling.

But before all that the furniture designs – separate for the Lok and Rajya Sabhas, the PMO, ministers' offices and common areas – had to be drawn, tested, re-worked, prototyped and finalised under the supervision of the principal architect and CPWD officials.

Apart from constructing a mock-up of the Lok Sabha in the Narsi factory in Navi Mumbai, another replica of a minister's office had to be built in Kirti Nagar in New Delhi.

### Machining details

According to Jagdish Kularia, Narsi's son and Director at Narsi Interior Infrastructure, the Bacci Master 5-axes, 8-head CNC shaper – “the only CNC shaper of its kind in India” – played an important role in machining more than 10,000 furniture pieces, running 20 hours a day without any downtime.

“We had to shape the benches and tables of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha with perfect radius. The table and bench mouldings would otherwise have to be made on a CNC machining centre, which would have taken up four times the time,” he said.

Homag's BHX series compact vertical CNC-machining centre for processing panel-shaped workpieces carried out all acoustic perforations on the chamber and lobby ceilings and wall surfaces, along with cabinet making. For through-feed edge banding and finishing of wooden lipping, Homag's KAL series machine was employed.

The Biesse Rover-J was put into action to machine the intricate carving of flowers, peacocks and other motifs on the fire doors and other furniture items.

Weining's Timbermat 4-side moulder (supplied by Nitshaw Technologies) helped machine the 1,200 door frames. Most of the power tools were from Festool.

The Altendorf F45 panel saw and SCM's traditional wood working machines, such as the planer, thicknesser from the L'invincibile series (supplied by Caple Industrial Solutions) also saw plenty of hours of rigorous work in the Navi Mumbai factory.

### Other contributors

The CP teak was secured from the Ballarshah depot of the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra, with assistance from Vidharbh Trading and Friends Timber in Nagpur.

*Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri (L), handing over a letter of appreciation to Narsi Kularia (second from left) and his son, Jagdish (R) recently. In a separate event in New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi felicitates members of Narsi Interior Infrastructure team for their contributions to the project.*



Nearly all of the plywood and flush doors were supplied by Greenply Industries, while the veneers were supplied by Century Plyboards India, Duroply Industries and Turakhia Overseas.

Hafele was able to supply all furniture hardware for the entire project, according to Jagdish. The woodworking adhesives came from Fevicol. “The only imported components for the interiors were door hinges from the German specialist, Geze GmbH,” he added.

ICA Pidilite, the leading Italian wood finishes brand, provided the wood coatings to protect and preserve surfaces and a broad palette of customised wood stains for the furniture.

Manish Airee, Senior Vice-President at ICA Pidilite, said, “We are extremely proud and delighted to have been chosen to partner for the interior finishes of the new Parliament House. We are grateful to the Central Public Works Department and Narsi Group for this incredible opportunity!”

All stainers were supplied by Asian Paints. Cefla’s finishing technology and machines were used for water-based PU coating on 80,000 square metres of surfaces during the project, Jagdish added.

Belgian expert, Promat Fire and Insulation, which got its products certified by the Indian Institute of Technology in haragpur, supplied the fire doors for the project through its Indian business arm in New Delhi.

From Narsi’s team, the prominent contributors to the NPB project were Dinesh Suthar, Nitesh Sharma, Nagaji Suthar, Sunil Jangid, Mangilal Suthar and Malaram Suthar.

## Challenges, achievements

I asked Narsi what were his biggest challenges in executing the project. “The shutdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic seriously disrupted our timelines. Of course, work in the factory and at the site continued, but with severe restrictions,” he said.

“I was so strict about quality that I camped in Delhi for more than a year, to personally supervise the work,” he recalls.

He is most happy that this “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity” presented itself to him, to prove that modern woodworking and automation could co-exist with traditional craftsmanship in such a monumental and historic project.

He is more than glad that he could achieve manufacturing and installation targets well in time at his factory in Navi Mumbai and the New Delhi site – proof of the mettle of his designers, machines, operators, materials and installation team.

According to Narsi, this was a golden chance for the furniture industry, engineers and architects to meet the ‘Make in India’ mission a success. “Personally, it was a dream come true. I took it up as a not-for-profit undertaking. It gave me a chance to leave behind a proud legacy,” he signs off.

Narsi has chaired the managing committee of the Furniture and Fitting Skills Council (FFSC), where he has promoted upskilling and certification efforts of the Union government. What more needs to be done, I ask.

Narsi Infrastructure has so far trained and certified more than 1,500 carpenters through various programmes of the FFSC, he says. It is time to now implement a multi-disciplinary approach to training and upskilling.

“Especially at the supervisory level, we need to have a multi-sectoral agenda, where a specialist in one field also knows the basics of the carpentry, electrical, civil construction and plumbing trades, as well as insights into engineering and design,” he emphasises.

*Ahead of commencement of work on the project, Narsi (third from left) confabulates with his technical team members at his factory in Turbhe, Navi Mumbai.*

