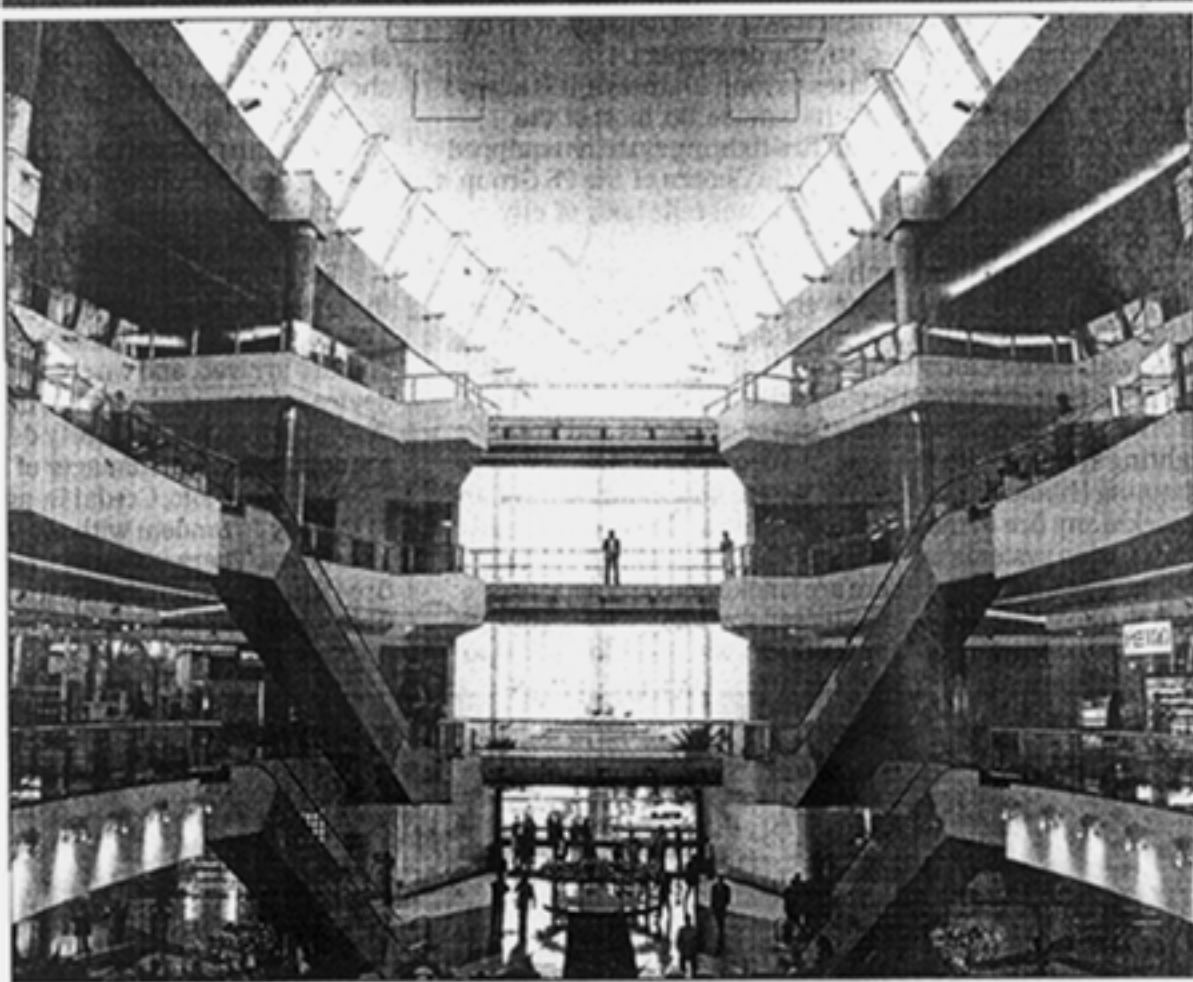


CITY'S LARGEST MALL UNVEILED



The atrium of South City mall, on Prince Anwar Shah Road. Picture by Pabitra Das

Shop, there's space

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Calcutta's trek to modern malls, which started with Forum four years ago, hit a high on Tuesday with the unveiling of the city's largest mall — also the first retail address designed by an overseas firm.

"At South City, you could be anywhere in the world," said Darryl Skinner, the managing director of Bentel Associates. The Johannesburg-headquartered retail architecture and interiors specialist provided the design solution.

"In today's competitive scenario, good design can be the first tool to fight obsolescence, creating the right tenant-mix and zoning," stressed Skinner.

The swank shopping address on Prince Anwar Shah Road boasts an expansive atrium, which itself acts as an organiser, and a "double-mall" effect with the multi-level car park, another first in the city. Glass balustrades aid visibility and at the upper level, the mall is pulled back to create punctures giving shoppers a wider sweep.

"There's a science to design within the paradigm of organised retail. Our primary objective is to get the circulation pattern right so that we can get more people past shop-fronts and there's an uninterrupted view of at least 30 per cent of all the line-shops at a glance," Skinner pointed out.

A Metro walk-through of the city's largest shop-food-films address...

SIZE DOES MATTER

The mall covers over a million sq ft. The retail space adds up to 650,000 sq ft. There are 134 retail outlets spread across five levels.

A nine-level car park can accommodate 1,300 vehicles. The total project value is Rs 650 crore, with the address yielding Rs 100 crore annually in taxes.

The promise of direct employment is pegged

at 5,000 and indirect employment at 15,000.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Developed by South City Projects consortium, it has been created and designed by Bentel Associates and Dulal Mukherjee. The construction is by Larsen & Toubro and the structural engineering by Meinhardt.

THE BIG FOUR

The anchors are Shoppers' Stop (83,000 sq ft), Pantaloons (71,000 sq ft-plus), Spencer's Hypermart (72,000 sq ft-plus) and Fame Cinemas (Calcutta's first six-screen multiplex, with a luxury audi having reclining seats).

THE MINI ANCHORS

Starmark, a books-music-toys-stationery-gifts outlet of over 20,000 sq ft, and Time Zone, a children's entertainment arena, over 14,000 sq ft.

BRANDWAGON

The big names include Marks & Spencer, The Body Shop, Guess, Wills Lifestyle, Levi's, Adidas, Nike, Reebok, Van Heusen, Raymonds, Ritu Kumar, Lladro, Carbon, Swarovski, Louis Phillipe, Arrow, Colour Plus, Provogue.

SIP AND BITE

The tone is set by Foodtalk, a 30,000-sq-ft food court with 13 types of cuisine. Mainland China takes up over 10,000 sq ft, while Sigree (food of undivided India), from the same stable, accounts for 4,600 sq ft-plus. Benjarong, a Thai restaurant, and Zara, a Spanish Tapas bar, will be star attractions. Kookie Jar, Cookie Man, Café Coffee Day are all coming here.

SAFETY FIRST

The South City mall has 167 closed-circuit cameras, nine emergency exit stairways, and modern fire detection and suppression systems.