



POWER GATE

ARCHITECT REVATHI KAMATH CREATES A GEOMETRICAL STEEL SCULPTURE WITH PARABOLAS AND intersecting lines for the Jindals' Super Thermal Power Plant in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh that not only serves as an imposing entrance but also doubles up as a memorial to the late OP Jindal

Architect Revathi Kamath has made stainless steel her material of choice. Her latest success story with the malleable metal is the entrance gateway to the Jindals' Super Thermal Power Plant complex located in the township of Tamner, Raigarh. Scaling above the transmission towers in the background, it resembles a giant paraboloid shape rising into the skyline.

Its twin conical hyperbolas, linked with a metal ellipse, pierce the sky, creating an illusory curve with the intersection of steel bars across the cone-like shapes, so that it resembles a projectile.

The gateway epitomises Revathi's personal philosophy of transforming energy from one form to another without affecting traditional and local social linkages. With the town-

ship at the centre of a tribal-inhabited area, Revathi drew inspiration from the tribal magician's tools: a ladder, a swing and a pole. She realised that each of these objects had a subtle meaning and tapped into natural energy forces, particularly wind energy and a propensity to gravity, that lent them the required balance.

When Revathi sat at her drawing board, she began without any pre-conceived plans, her brain uncluttered with client considerations. The concept developed with a lot of thought and imagination. "A stainless steel ensemble came into my mind and I blew it up into a design guided by the idea that since it was a gateway it had to be symmetrical," she explains.

Two geometrical cones, made up of a lattice of criss-crossing lines and flaring at the bottom, rise up to the sky

In actual terms, the gateway stands 33m tall, on a roadway running across 20m. Totally self-balanced, the identical structures are held together by a circular framework above. The base of the gateway rests on four pyramids. These pillars support the framework of the parabola. "When you get to the gate itself, you see a radiation of lines as well as their concentration. This suggests the focusing of energy as well as its transformation," Revathi elaborates.

While the gateway is an acknowledged stunner by day, by night it has an ethereal quality surrounding it due to its specialised lighting. The six sets of lights at the bottom are placed at an angle and focus on creating a floodlit base area rising upwards.

The many parts of this complex creation had to be assembled under close supervision at the site. "The main concern was that things should not come apart and the joints were crucial to this aspect. The tube-fitted plate and cleat on either side were bolted together, making a concession for wind flow that would not adversely affect the entire form," says Revathi.

In the final stage, the gateway was reinvented into a memorial dedicated to the founder of the industrial house, the late OP Jindal, whose statue graces the centre, beneath the parabola. A patch of grass symbolises the river Ganga, and visitors wishing to pay homage to it can use the pathway to approach the place. Cars have a clear view of the entrance as they enter the parking lot. The gateway is more than an architectural statement, and as Revathi says, "It is many things in many situations."



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