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# Totally floored. Knotting and weaving a very Indian look for the new Parliament

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The handmade Mirzapur carpets are made by Obeetee Carpets, reflecting Indian motifs to cover the floor

BY CHITRA NARAYANAN

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The flooring of the **new Parliament** is all set to make a statement as the richly hued specially commissioned carpets wear proud Indian motifs. While the Rajya Sabha



carpet has the national flower — the lotus — as the theme in kokum red shades, the Lok Sabha carpet wears the iridescent blue colours of the peacock.

The themes of the carpet were chosen after much deliberation, though one thing was clear from the beginning — they would be handmade and reflective of Indian traditions, unlike the Persian-style carpets adorning parts of the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

India's largest carpet maker Obeetee Carpets has crafted the carpets for both Houses with the total area covered spanning nearly 50,000 sq ft. Over 158 different pieces were made and stitched together in the Lok Sabha hall, while the Rajya Sabha carpet comprises 156 pieces. The carpets were planned and engineered to fit into the shape of a semicircle.

The design briefs were given by architectural firm HCP Design headed by Bimal Patel, the Gujarati architect behind the Kashi Vishwanath corridor project and the Sabarmati riverfront projects. The Central Vista project will bear Patel's signature.



Handmade carpets are laborious and it was intensely challenging to finish the assignment in the short time given for the assignment, says Rudra Chatterjee, Chairman of Obeetee Carpets. Over 900 weavers and 300 finishers were involved in the making of these carpets which took 18 months from brief to handover, and was masterminded at Mirzapur, the factory headquarters of the company. The intricately woven carpets have 120 knots per square inch, totalling to over 600 million knots.

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There are nearly 25 shades in these richly hued woollen carpets and the play of colour is such that it creates an ombre movement as the carpet moves out to the periphery.

The new building — shaped like a triangle — with an expected lifespan of 150 years, will have 1,272 seats, 888 in the Lok Sabha and 384 in the Rajya Sabha. Significantly, Chatterjee says the handmade carpets also have a long life.

### History repeats

Incidentally, Obeetee also crafted the new carpets for the Rashtrapati Bhawan in 1992, when the original carpets commissioned in 1929 had got frayed, and President R Venkatraman commissioned new ones.

Another major carpet-maker Jaipur Rugs has also been involved in the new Parliament building, carpeting the Ministers' offices in both Houses, the Solicitor-General office for both RS and LS and some of the waiting areas. It has covered 7,000 sq ft in different sizes and dimensions, using earthy tones of maroons, browns, beiges, and rusts, as well as aqua, mint greens and blues.



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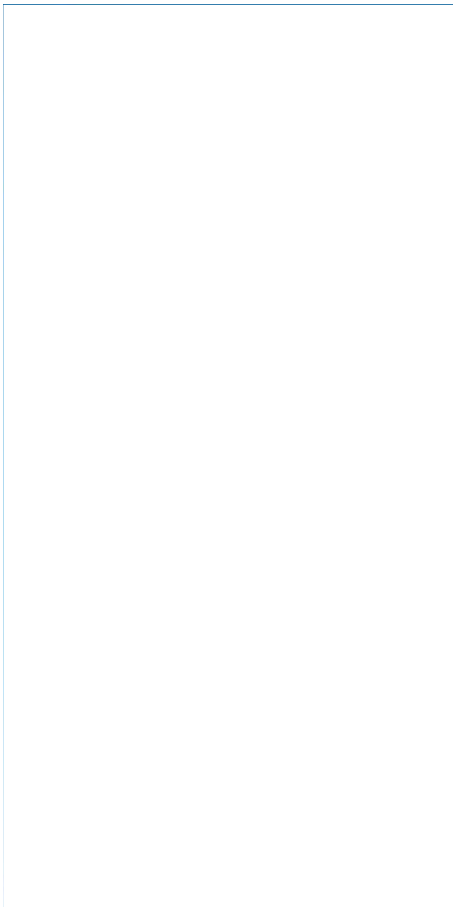
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