GUEST APPEARANCE
SHAMSUDHEEN UMAR
MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLAZA MIDDLE EAST

MOHANDIS CORNER
SUSTAINABILITY CONTINUING WITH THE THEME FROM OUR LAST ISSUE

FEATURE FOCUS
CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE CONFERENCES - ALGER
With the aim of continually improving and introducing innovative products in the MEA region, LATICRETE Middle East and Africa, in this month, will launch a newly developed product. The LATICRETE® SPARTACOTE™ Urethane Cement system is intended for heavy duty environments and is designed to withstand thermal shock, impact, abrasion and chemical exposure.

Along with innovation, LATICRETE is also committed to sustainability. Simply put, sustainability is something on which our collective global future depends on. LATICRETE is committed to developing innovative, sustainable, low-VOC products in compliance with ISO 9001:2015 quality standards to assure a consistent, quality installation, and a better quality of life for future generations.

To put it into focus, in this issue we continue with Sustainability, Tile & LATICRETE, a topic that we chose, to highlight the advantages of using Ceramic Tile & Stone, over Vinyl and Laminate flooring.

Speaking of the advantage of tile and stone, we take a look at The Centre International de Conférences Alger (CICA), wherein the quality and sustainability of LATICRETE Tile Adhesives were key to a successful completion of one of North Africa’s largest multi-purpose venues, and a first class international conference and exhibition center.

We are also proud to introduce our very own LATICRETE Experience Centre in Nigeria which is sure to leave a positive impact on any visitor looking to learn more about LATICRETE and our products. Our first of its kind LATICRETE license plate also makes its debut in Uganda and we are thankful to our local partners for this initiative.

As the events season is in full swing, LATICRETE will be exhibiting at The Big 5 at the DWTC, where we will display LATICRETE solutions and showcase newly launched products. I would like to personally invite you to please come and visit us at our stand, in Hall 5 - Stand F221, from the 26th to the 29th of November.

I hope to see you there.

Sujit Singh  
Managing Director  
LATICRETE Middle East & Africa
WE HAVE OUR VERY OWN LATICRETE LICENSE PLATE!

Taking the initiative, Mr. Ali Raza, Director and Mr. Suraj Joshi, Project Manager, RAK Uganda provided LATICRETE with its very own marketing tool on wheels, at no cost!

SNAP SHARE WIN!

VISIT OUR STAND AT THE BIG 5

HALL 5 - STAND # F 221

26 - 29 NOVEMBER 2017 | DUBAI WORLD TRADE CENTRE
CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE CONFERENCES ALGER (CICA)

Our current project feature, from the team at LATICRETE Middle East and Africa, takes us to Algeria, officially the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria. Algeria is a sovereign state in North Africa on the Mediterranean coast. Its capital and most populous city is Algiers, located in the country’s far north. With an area of 2,381,741 square kilometers (919,595 sq. mi.), Algeria is the tenth-largest country in the world, and the largest in Africa.

It is in the city of Algiers that the team from LATICRETE Africa succeeded in getting a contract for the CIC Alger project, better known as The Centre International de Conferences Alger.

Inaugurated in early 2016, the Centre International de Conferences Alger (CICA) is one of North Africa’s most exciting new venues for one-of-a-kind conferences, exhibitions, meetings, weddings, special events and more. Located in the exclusive Club des Pins area of Algiers, the CICA is both a regal and secure environment on Algiers’ glistening waterfront.

The Centre International de Conferences Alger is one of the biggest multi-purpose centers in the Mediterranean and Africa region and among the five largest in the world. Set amongst breathtaking surroundings on an astounding 270,000 m² (3 million sq. ft.) of resplendent public space, the CIC Algiers offers the perfect environment for a wide range of events, conferences & congresses, banquets, and expositions.

Designed by FARRIS & PARTNERS, the flexibility of the spaces was the key theme during the overall design development. The Centre International de Conferences Alger is a venue with a lot going on. Within the building, defined by a roof with a fluid shape that is in keeping with the undulating movement of the dunes, are a host of well-defined spaces that include:

- The principal auditorium with a 6,000 capacity. It is the symbol and central element of the CICA. The hall offers a high level of functionality, with acoustic characteristics and technological features, which means it can respond to a range of different needs in terms of performances and staging of events.

- The conference hall is a jewel of technology and transformability. It has a capacity of 700 seats that can be equipped with desks and a state of the art voting system. It can be transformed into an assembly – a round table arrangement with 270 seats or into a hall for receptions. This versatility of use is made possible through a mechanism that raises the entire conference forum including the 705 seats, introducing below a room already set for the other uses.

- The CICA also has 6 polyvalent rooms for seminars and receptions with a maximum capacity of 300 seats each

- The CICA also has 1 banquet hall with a total capacity of up to 3,000 seats. Furthermore, this hall can be divided into three separate function areas.

- The building is also host to 7 restaurants offering a total of 1,700 capacity, for visitors and exhibitors alike.

- The venue also has a 15,000m² of Exhibition space with the latest technical infrastructure for organizing state of the art trade shows and events.

Coupled with the above, the venue also boosts a Presidential area with an apartment for the Head of State and two Guest Apartments. It also has 61 Delegation Offices, a Press Area, 4 Radio Studios and an on-site TV Studio! The CICA also houses over 30 kitchens, bars and restaurants on their premises.
Creating a world class facility was the goal and when it came to quality, the contractor, China State Construction and Engineering Corporation, chose to work with LATICRETE to deliver outstanding results. The scope of work covered the main auditorium, the conference halls and the multi-functional event space. The contractor also chose to work with LATICRETE on the 15,000 m² exhibition hall.

As the project required vast areas to be tiled, LATICRETE® Adhesives were the perfect solution for the job at hand. LATICRETE adhesives and mortars ensure that installations go faster, easier, and with predictable results time after time. From high-strength construction epoxy adhesives to thinset or thick bed mortars, LATICRETE adhesives are custom-formulated to deliver speed and efficiency on the entire range of applications.

Although different projects call for different features; LATICRETE adhesive products are designed to meet these specific needs. Thinset adhesives and mortars feature unique wetting characteristics, products reinforced with special ingredients for unmatched non-sag performance, products with long open times, and products built with antimicrobial protection to inhibit the growth of stain-causing mold and mildew.

For this project our team used LATICRETE 325 which is high strength, polymer fortified cementitious adhesive for installing Tile and Stone. Moreover, LATICRETE 325 meets and exceeds the requirement for ANSI A 118.4 and Euro Norm C2E. Recommended for wet areas such as bathrooms, kitchens and steam rooms. LATICRETE 325 has a high bond strength with both porcelain and ceramic tiles. It is also excellent for large format ceramic tiles in interior and exterior applications.

As pointed out by Mr. Joseph Dacosta, Regional Manager, LATICRETE Africa, “It was no doubt a prestigious project for us at LATICRETE and I ensured that the applicators got the right training required, before the actual application. With large surface areas to be applied, the scale was immense and the right training and prior education on the product was key to delivering results that matched and exceeded expectations.”

We at LATICRETE Middle East and Africa are proud to have been a part of The Centre International de Conférences Alger. A first-class international conference and exhibition center, which is not only the largest multi-purpose venue of its kind in North Africa, but also one of the most technically-advanced, purpose-built convention centers in the MENA region — and quite possibly the world.
Continuing with the theme from our last issue: Is Tile a good choice in regards to green construction, sustainability, the environment, and human health... we take a look at the use of Vinyl and Laminate flooring along with the advantages of Ceramic Tile & Stone.

Vinyl Flooring — Vinyl and linoleum flooring has been in use for over 100 years as a flooring product and is essentially made the same way today as it was at the time of its inception. It is sometimes billed as the original “green” flooring material, despite the fact that tile and stone has been used for thousands of years as a flooring and wall veneer. Linoleum flooring is manufactured from some rapidly renewable resources, such as powdered wood/cork, linseed oil, and other materials over a fiber backing.

Some vinyl flooring products utilize phthalates (plasticizers that give linoleum flexibility and resiliency) which is a material found on the International Living Building Institute (ILBI) “Living Building Challenge Red List (Prerequisite 5)” in order to be certified as a “Living Building” a project cannot contain, among other chemicals and compounds, any phthalates. It is important to note that not all vinyl flooring products contain phthalates, so please check with the vinyl flooring product manufacturer for more information on their specific product(s).

Vinyl products and their adhesive, which may still exist in buildings, can contain asbestos. Asbestos is a material which has a long and clouded history with health concerns (e.g. mesothelioma, lung cancer, etc.). Removal of asbestos from structures requires expensive and complex mitigation techniques, so often the asbestos based flooring is simply covered with a new and safer veneer.

However, if proper records are not kept or nobody checks the records, when the new veneer is removed it puts people at risk because the flooring which contains asbestos may be removed as well, with no one’s knowledge!

Laminate Flooring — Laminate flooring is a layered synthetic material which has been fused using a lamination process and can simulate wood, tile or stone flooring. Laminate is usually manufactured using melamine resins and high density fiber board (HDF) and are covered by an applied layer and a clear protective layer. Laminate floor is inexpensive to purchase and can be installed by almost anyone from beginner to expert.

While many may feel that lamimates are the ideal choice as flooring option, it does have some concerns which may have an effect on health and safety. As stated earlier, laminate flooring is often manufactured from melamine resins which are manufactured from formaldehyde. Formaldehyde is a material which is found in ILBI “Living Building Challenge Red List (Prerequisite 5)” as a product which can cause health/toxicity concerns.

Some laminate flooring products use a chemical process to reduce and/or neutralize formaldehyde emissions from the floor. There are also some other health and safety concerns with laminate flooring which should be taken into consideration. Moisture may cause laminate flooring to buckle, warp or soften, and may even allow for mold and mildew to grow under the flooring. Gapping between the boards may occur and peaking is fairly common if proper allowance for movement is not made during installation.

Laminate flooring can also be very slippery, which can lead to slip/fall injuries for adults, children and pets. Ceramic Tile and Stone - Ceramic tile and stone are multi-functional veneer finishes which have the ability to be installed in practically any environment. Tile and stone can be installed indoors, outdoors and submerged in any climate, almost anywhere in the world. Tile and stone can be installed on walls, floors, soffits, ceilings, countertops, and backsplashes in residential, commercial, industrial, and artistic applications. There are those who claim that tile and stone utilize natural resources which are not renewable, and they would be correct. There are those who say that a great deal of energy is used during the manufacturing process for ceramic tile, and they would be correct.

The firing process during tile manufacturing requires a great deal of heat which is provided from a variety of heat sources. In fact, between 90 — 95% of tile manufacturing energy consumption is used for the firing of the tile. Research is being conducted and techniques established which utilize renewable fuels to fire a kiln from the beginning of the process to the end. Other measures are being used to reuse heat which remains from the firing process to supply energy for the drying ovens and for production of electricity used by the manufacturing facility.

This will make more effective use of fuel which can ultimately lower the cost of manufacturing while benefitting the environment. At the recycling level, dust collected during the manufacturing process and other conformation waste are being reintroduced into the manufacturing paste. Water is being reused and recycled in closed systems to minimize the impact on the environment. These steps and more have contributed significantly to reductions in energy consumption and postproduction waste.

SHAMSUDHEEN UMAR
Managing Director, Plaza Middle East

Having been involved and brought up in an environment that saw him acquire knowledge of the building materials industry at a very young age, Mr. Shamsudheen Umar set up Plaza Middle East in the U.A.E. as a way of expanding overseas and tapping into the limitless opportunity that is Dubai.

We spoke to the Managing Director of Plaza Middle East to better understand the opportunity he saw in the region and his ties back home.

So it all started in Kerala…

Yes! My family comes from the building materials and trading industry and has been involved in the profession for over fifty years. We have established ourselves as the one stop shop for all construction related supplies and materials. While our beginning was modest, we have now grown to owning and operating seven branches across north Kerala and our core focus has been tiles and sanitary wares. We are also proud to be the supplier of A.C.C. Cements in Kerala, which is India’s foremost manufacturer of cement and ready mixed concrete. We have also tied up with and are the main dealers for various brands of tiles and sanitary wares in Kerala.

Interestingly you mentioned getting two educations, one through the normal education system and the second by helping out in your shops, selling and learning about the family business…

Absolutely, I have since a very early age been taught the value of hard work. My time spent in my family’s shops learning the trade was important to get me started in the industry, and I appreciate the value that it brings in shaping a young mind. At the same time my formal education and having successfully completed my M.B.A, played a large role in helping me shape, mold and strategically expand the business, with the support of my family, into what it is today.

The move to Dubai came about because…

Well, it was in 2002 that I set up and started to run an independent unit for building materials in Kannur, which is a coastal city in the south of Kerala. After successfully establishing and running the same I realized the potential for something similar outside of India. My family had ties in Dubai and we had been visiting the city on and off. Every time you came to Dubai you were guaranteed to see something new, under construction and to me it truly is a city that never sleeps! It was apparent to me that our next phase of expansion was to be outside of South India and the opportunities to operate in and out of Dubai were manifold. With a slew of construction projects being announced Dubai was a market with opportunities aplenty. Once I set up and opened a company here, we immediately saw our business grow and we started to take on projects that were more complex and larger in scale than previously supplied to by us. An important thing to note is that Dubai or the U.A.E. also served as a local hub for us to service the African markets along with other Asian countries. With this reach and expansion came knowledge and the ability for us to see ourselves compete on a truly global scale.

Assuming that the market here functions differently from South India, did you setup knowing what product categories you were going to deal with from the onset?

Initially in 2011, when we set up shop, the idea was to start small and scale up based on market requirements. We started with tiles and sanitary wares and expanded to include plumbing, electrical, building materials and hardware within our product lines.

You mentioned LATICRETE and the Big 5…

It was at the Big 5 show a couple of years back when I was first introduced to LATICRETE. I was invited to the show and while there, happened to see a demonstration at the LATICRETE stand for one of their waterproofing products. While I can’t recall the exact product, I remember being impressed with how effective the product was and its ease of use. I immediately got in touch with a LATICRETE representative at the stand and continue to work with the same person ever today.

In a manner of speaking, this person was your first point of contact with LATICRETE and is someone who continues to partner with you…

Yes and that person is Ervin Magno. I got in touch with him several years back and he has been helping me promote LATICRETE ever since. One thing I can always count on is his enthusiasm to get things done and provide a solution. This only goes to show the level of service that I have come to expect from LATICRETE and I know that the same will also be extended to my customers.

Speaking of customers, could you highlight a few projects wherein you have used LATICRETE products…

One prestigious project that I can recall was that of a renovation for a palace, for which we were tasked with supplying only the highest quality materials. Throughout the entire project we only used LATICRETE Waterproofing products and the results were fantastic. Another project is the Metro Falcon chain of restaurants, wherein we have exclusively used LATICRETE Tile Adhesives for all tiled surfaces. I have always relied on the quality of LATICRETE, and the results end and user reviews have always been exemplary.

You are also one of our partners that stock LATICRETE products, how has that helped Plaza Middle East…

Being a stockist for LATICRETE has actually given us the opportunity to reach out and widen our local market share. What happens is contractors know that we always carry a certain quantity of LATICRETE products and they always come to us looking to fulfill their short order needs. This has also led to a lot of new contractors seeking us out which in turn creates a whole new set of relationships for Plaza Middle East.

An achievement that you are proud of…

As a family run business the one thing that was ingrained in me at an early stage was to give back to society. Every year we ensure that 1% of our total turnover is used towards charitable purposes. My father has set up and has been running a school for girls back in India, for over 20 years. He has also set up a family trust in Kannur to ensure that patients with cancer who cannot afford treatment are given the proper care and treatment. This is something that I hope to continue and follow in his footsteps.
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