

## 'Now, business and design go hand-in-hand'

■ Experts discuss importance of design in business, say there's visible shift towards creative economy in India

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THE managers of Ahmedabad and the eclectic designer fraternity came together at the Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA) to discuss design and innovation in the creative economy. David Kester, chief executive of the UK Design Council, and Darlie O Koshy, director of the National Institute of Design (NID), discussed the importance of design in creating a

successful business venture.

"With India having topped the Global Retail Development Index in 2005 and 2006, the marketing space for 'brands' is growing faster than it ever has," said Koshy.

"Although India is primarily an agricultural country, it has developed as an industrial economy in the last five decades, and now there is a visible shift towards the knowledge-based creative economy," he said.

Kester spoke about the maturing of the 'love affair be-

tween business and design'.

"Designing is becoming more and more important in the competitive business world. According to a study in the UK, every £100 a business spends on design, it increases the turnover by £225," he said.

In 1995, Ahmedabad was acclaimed as one of 12 creative cities in the world in the book *The Creative City*, co-authored by Landry and Bianchini.

Product developers across the world are beginning to understand the significance of

designing in the context of its impact on the economy, society, culture and community.

"The emphasis is not only on sustainable designs but also environmentally sound designs. "90 per cent of the environmental impact depends on today's designing decisions," Kester said.

Whereas earlier, company managers were least bothered about a product design, now a design team is involved in the product right from the beginning and not just at the branding stage," said Koshy.

In comparison to the UK, which has 1,85,000 designers contributing 11 per cent to the country's GDP, India has only about 5,000 designers with a business worth only Rs 200-300 crore.

Koshy expressed great hopes in the National Design Policy which came into effect in February this year. "Of the Rs 200 crore set aside in the policy to have a 'design-enabled Indian industry', Rs 2 crore has already been allocated to NID to begin work on the project," he said.