Reflecting the diversity of current research interests, those range in multiple dimensions: from nostalgic conservationism to futuristic enthusiasm, critical evaluation of the state of affairs to hopeful reformist ideologies, and conventional survey methods to modern simulation technologies, this issue of Bhumi comes to you with five articles extracted from such different subject areas.

The first article presents a rather descriptive account on the traditional courtyards of the Bangali villages. In many traditional South Asian cultures, the courtyard has been the space for community life, day to day functions, life supportive activities and cultural events and manifestations. It is not inappropriate to say that the courtyard was the spatial means of unification of such communities for known times. However, the admirers of the traditions are concerned of the progressive diminution of this courtyard arrangement in contemporary housing projects driven by the objectives of meeting numbers and satisfying bare necessities. The article is attached with a few photographic and graphical illustrations that enhanced the vivid understanding of the reader of the context and the content of the subject matter.

The second article is on the competency assessment of the Sri Lankan quantity surveying graduates those who seek employment in the Middle East. As the construction activities boomed in the region since 1980s, the construction sector professionals find opportunities, but the fast-evolving sector demands fresh entrants to equip themselves with knowledge and skills in latest methods and technologies. However, it seems that such competencies are not adequately sharpened by current tertiary education, especially in the university degree courses, that does not evolve parallel to the transformation in the industry. The study can be useful for the continuous improvement of the relevant course structure, curriculum and training programs.

The third article is on a study that used computer-based modeling and simulation technology Cellular Automata, to compare likely circumstances of the current urban development trends in Kurunegala area in Sri Lanka with the planning agency (Urban Development Authority) envisaged future state of developments as reflected through the prescribed control measure: the Zone Factor. At a time that land use modeling and simulation have been commonly used for urban planning purposes, this work shed light into needy close integration of state of the art research and development inputs into institutionalized planning processes in Sri Lanka for better informed decision making towards economically and environmentally sustainable urban future.

The fourth article reported an urban design studio project carried out by a team of undergraduate students in Piliyandala, an emerging urban area located in the peripheries of Colombo, Sri Lanka. The project departs from the popular viewpoint that pedestrianization would have solved many of the chaotic situations, inconveniences and the haphazardness that we experience today in evolving urban built environments. Accordingly, extensive mapping of pedestrian behavior, use of space for different activities and their existing and potential
connectedness was undertaken. This article will be of interest to the readers, in a context where not many scholarly works have seen the virtue of students’ insights, in the development of planning and design schemes for problem stricken urban areas.

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