

SHELTER FOR ALL, A DREAM IN THE MAKING



HABITAT WINS YET ANOTHER NATIONAL HONOUR!



The director general's home at NIRD, Hyderabad has won national award institution by HUDCO under green building category. The official residence is the first ever building built in the public domain in Telegana.



HOMAGE TO AR. JOSE PHILIP

Ar. Jose Philip was a close friend of Habitat Group and we remember him for his meaningful intervention in the field. He was one of the first architects in Kerala and was instrumental in bringing the fraternity together.

EDITOR'S CORNER

Summer: It's going to be 'normal'

If a recent study, conducted by a team of renowned scientists from various foreign and national universities, is any indication, then Kerala is poised to experience extreme heatwave in the near future. I was also a part of the study, which suggests that most of the regions now getting rains will not get showers and other regions might be lashed by unseasonal rains. With the increase in atmospheric temperature, unexpected heavy rains are possible. We are already being buffeted by the searing summer heat, which has become a nightmarish reality.

Traditional Kerala houses played a pivotal role in maintaining a moderate weather in our land. They were built in compliance with the principles of our native building science, called Vastu Shastra. The flow of air, availability of water and other resources were factored in while constructing a house. Sloping thatched roofs, wooden air columns and central courtyards made our houses in Kerala hospitable even in searing heat and horrible humidity. However, by the second half of the 20th century, there has been an over-dependence on cement and metal in construction, resulting in mushrooming of 'boxy' structures with their façade and backyards made of concrete.

It has now become imperative to build our homes that is more compatible with nature. Surely, it should not entail compromising on privacy and security concerns. We need more plants with foliage around our homes. We need to think seriously about ways to bring back air circulation into our home, rather than welcoming air conditioners, which take a toll on our health apart from contributing to global warming. We need to ensure that Mother Earth provides air which is not toxic; we also need to initiate measures that would increase the fast-depleting ground water table level. Design is critical in this process and the role of architect and building engineers becomes vital.

Warm regards,

G SHANKAR
FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN
HABITAT TECHNOLOGY GROUP



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U N-HABITAT SHELTER HUB



The United Nations is handholding Habitat in establishing ten Shelter Hubs across worst flood-affected areas in Kerala like Pathanamthitta, Idukki and Wayanad. The UN-Habitat intervention aims to promote cost-effective and environment-friendly flood-resistant construction practices through permanent exhibition venues and training centres.

The project is intended to bring about a behavioural change and awareness both among the people and the government towards eco-friendly, disaster-resilient and sustainable housing solutions. Headed by engineers and architects from Habitat, they conduct regular visits and help the beneficiaries by providing them with technical knowhow in rebuilding their houses.

In Idukki, these shelter hubs are located in Cheruthoni, Kattapana, Adimaly and Munnar while in Wayanad the hubs are in Kalpetta, Mananthawady and Meenangady. As for Pathanamthitta, the hubs are in Kumbazha, Thiruvalla and Aranmula.

As part of exhibitions conducted under the 'Surakshita Keralam' project, Habitat hosted Shelter Hub stalls for spreading awareness about technical aspects of disaster-resilient construction. Thousands of people were reached out through the exhibitions that were held in the districts of Alappuzha, Thrissur, Idukki, Ernakulam, Kottayam, Wayanad, Pathanamthitta and Thiruvananthapuram.

"Through the Shelter Hubs, Habitat could successfully provide technical consultancy to 1,211 people, 137 contractors and 2,216 artisans. So far, we have visited 791 sites and trained 322 masons," says Ms Nanditha, Habitat's architect who is working on this project

Site visits involve assessing the damage, estimating the reconstruction costs for the people, providing training and offering advice on how to bring down cost and finish the reconstruction with the amount allotted by the government.



"We aim to bring in a culture where building and construction are looked from a sustainable angle. By making use of our experience in low-cost construction, use of locally available materials and the on-site study done by our team, we have put together certain technologies and strategies of construction which are more disaster-resilient and sustainable. We are trying to train masons who will pass on the techniques and technologies learnt from our training sessions to more workers engaged with them. This will create a ripple effect by upgrading the skill of a larger number of workers. The main intention is to bring in a changed outlook towards construction and nature conservation, which are crucial components of the goal of sustainable housing for all," says Shankar.

HABITAT EXECUTES ASTER HOMES' HOUSING PROJECT FOR FLOOD-HIT PEOPLE



Habitat considers it as yet another feather in its cap that it has been chosen to execute the Aster Homes project for the flood-hit communities across the state, which has been launched by Aster D M Healthcare, a leading health care services provider in India and the GCC region, in association with Rotary Club.

The project, which took off in December 2018, aims at building disaster-resistant houses that can withstand future calamities and thus will not render their residents homeless.

"We have a three-layered construction plan. There will be new structures for those who have lost their houses fully in the floods. Then, there will be cluster homes for group of people if the government can provide suitable land.

.....
 Lastly, we will undertake retro-fitting of partially damaged houses," said Aster DM Healthcare Chairman Dr Azad Moopen. The houses will be built using locally available construction materials. The project has already got under way in the districts of Ernakulam, Wayanad, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta and Kozhikode.

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Aparna Balamurali
 Film Actress and
 Playback Singer



Dr. Azad Moopen,
 Chairman and MD of
 Aster DM Healthcare

Under the project, there will be 25 houses each in Ernakulam, Wayanad and Alappuzha. In Kottayam and Pathanamthitta, there will be 10 and 5 houses, respectively. In Kochi, there will be three clusters consisting of 35, 10 and eight houses each. A cluster of 20 houses will be built in Wayanad. In Kozhikode, there will be six new houses, including one in Kollandy, and three in Malappuram. The first completed cluster, comprising 10 houses, will be handed over to the beneficiaries on April 24 at Kunnukara in Ernakulam district.

THE LONE INDIAN VOICE AT OSAKA

G Shankar represents India at International Recovery Platform (IRP) at Osaka Sendai Kobe. International Recovery Forum 2019 at Kobe, Japan was held by a consortium of UN agencies and the World Bank. Shankar, who was panel speaker in the plenary, led the session on Kerala's recovery before the secretariat.



G Shankar at the International Book Festival with Shaji N Karun, the renowned Indian film director and cinematographer.

Felicitating Bombay Jayashree, the noted Indian Carnatic music vocalist and music composer, at the fest.



KIRTHI 2019: THE CROW IS BACK

An architect is basically an art person with a paint brush and a scale. G Shankar is invited at most art events. Here is a moment G Shankar shares with the Academy award fame Bombay Jayashree at the 2nd edition of Kirthi2019, the second International Book Fest in Kochi.

NICHE IPM 2018 AT JALANDHAR



G Shankar was at NICHE IPM 2018, which was attended by an array of leading academic scientists, researchers and research scholars to discuss the most recent innovations, trends, and concerns as well as practical challenges encountered and solutions adopted in the fields of Architecture, Urban planning, Interior Design, Furniture Design and Product Design.

He was a specially invited speaker at the 3rd Neo-International Conference on Habitable Environments & International Professional Meet (Niche IPM 2018) held on 16-17 November, 2018 at Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar, which is the largest single campus University in India with over 40,000 students, 3500 faculty and 200+ programmes.

NEWS IN BRIEF

- G Shankar gave the prestigious G. Sankara Pillai Memorial Lecture at School of Letters of Mahatma Gandhi University on 1st January 2019.
- G Shankar spoke at the 31st Kerala Science Congress (KSC) at Kollam on 2nd Feb 2019. An annual gathering of scientists, academician and technologists initiated in 1989, this year's KSC discussed topics dealing with S&T intervention in rebuilding the state.
- A 60-student batch from SJB School of Architecture & Planning, Bengaluru visited Habitat Centre on 3rd Feb 2019 for a day's seminar and training on sustainable technologies. They also visited "Siddhartha" to meet and interact with the architect, G Shankar.
- G Shankar spoke at a seminar organised by LIFE Mission on the 'Post-Flood Rehabilitation: Challenges and Opportunities'. The seminar was conducted to mark '1,000 days of LDF Government'.



PREM JAIN MEMORIAL ADDRESS, IHC, DELHI

G. Shankar was the keynote speaker at the Prem Jain Memorial Address of the Prem Jain Memorial Trust. It was held at Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on 28th Jan 2019 as part of Harit-Prem, Bharat Mahotsav in memory of Dr Prem Jain, who is revered in India as the "Father of Green Buildings." In the memory of late Dr Prem Jain, the trust works with a mission to identify future leaders and be a catalyst for global development of sustainability.

LATEST PROJECTS

PLANTATION WORKERS HOUSING AT MUNNAR

Foundation stone laid for a pilot project of 100 houses for plantation workers by the Hon'ble Minister for Labour Shri. T P Ramakrishnan



RENOVATION AT PADMANABHA SWAMY TEMPLE



MILMA HOUSES - MANCHAVILAKAM

Habitat is proud to associate with Kerala's first 'Swadesh Darshan' project that was commissioned by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple in the capital city on 15th January 2019. Habitat is part of the renovation work which is aimed at bringing back the glory of the 16th century temple. The Swadesh Darshan project will enhance the temple's infrastructure, offering hassle-free worship. It will also create a 5.2-km heritage walk corridor, besides building amenities like bio-toilets and bathrooms. Under the project, the Padmatheertham temple pond will be renovated.



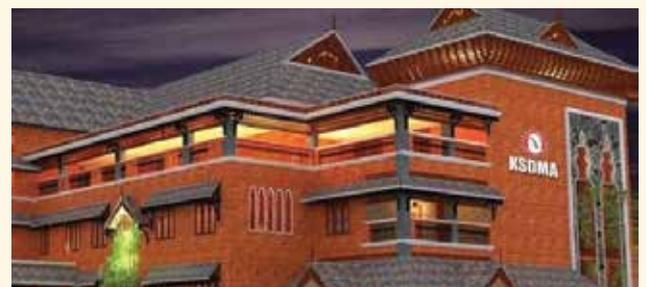
CE BUILDING INAUGURATED

Kerala Revenue Minister Shri E. Chandrasekharan inaugurated the Kerala University's Controller of Examinations building in Thiruvananthapuram on 27th February, in the presence of several dignitaries. Speaking on the occasion, G Shankar thanked for the opportunity given to Habitat Technology Group for constructing the building.



KSDMA BUILDING INAUGURATED

The aesthetically designed KSDMA (Kerala State Disaster Management Authority) building, built by Habitat at the Observatory Hills, Vikas Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram, was inaugurated by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan on 29th January 2019.



BKS HOUSING UNITS HANDED OVER

Habitat is proud to build Bahrain Kerala Samajam's housing units for the needy. Two such units, funded by Alex Baby and Devan (Colours, Kshetra), Bahrain were handed over at Haripad in the presence of Ramesh Chennithala and Radhakrishnan Pillai.



HABITAT DEVELOPING AMENITIES IN PILGRIM CENTRES UNDER SWADESH DARSHAN SCHEME



Swadesh Darshan Scheme, a project undertaken by the Kerala government's Department of Tourism, is one of its flagship projects for development of thematic circuits in a planned and prioritized manner in major pilgrim and tourism centres in the state.

The scheme was launched in 2014-5 by the Government of India. Till date, the Union Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned 77 projects worth Rs. 6131.88 crore to 30 States and Union Territories. In Kerala, the project consists of seven clusters, out of which Habitat will be handling three. As part of the scheme, Habitat will be taking up infrastructure development in 69 pilgrim centres across Kerala, which include temples, mosques and churches. These are located in Kollam, Thiruvananthapuram, Pathanamthitta, Idukki, Thrissur and Ernakulam.

This scheme was kickstarted with the development of facilities in the premises of Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram, which is one of the most famous shrines in Kerala visited by thousands from within and outside the country. The main idea of this scheme is to improve amenities for the people flocking to see these sacred places and the heritage zones around them. The proposed infrastructure will not only facilitate the domestic tourists but also foreign visitors. They will be universal-friendly that would satisfy all the tourists from different parts of the world. For example, the toilets will be built in such a way that these take care of the physically challenged also.

Each centre will be provided with seven amenities, such as multipurpose hall, dining hall, auditorium, interlocking pathway for parking, toilet blocks and drinking water outlet. While constructing the facilities, architects from Habitat had visited each pilgrim centre to understand the requirement of the pilgrims/tourists and also design them in accordance with the Department of Tourism criteria. The basic architectural plan of every existing facility will be preserved while adding to them new amenities.

HABITAT CREATES HI-TECH TOILETS IN 40 SCHOOLS UNDER ROTARY CLUB PROJECT

As part of WinS target challenge of Rotary Club, Habitat Technology group has designed and executed high tech toilets in 40 schools across Kerala. These schools are in Kottayam, Allapuzha, Thrivananthapuram, Pathanamthitta and Kollam .

WinS project aims at upgradation of sanitary facilities in schools, including construction of separate child friendly toilets for boys and girls, wherever required, and repairing the existing facilities.

The work was completed in a short span of three months.



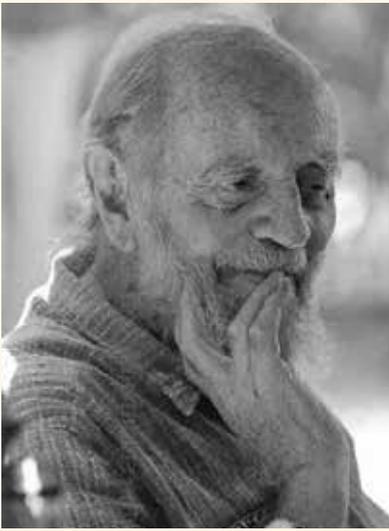
TESTIMONIALS

At Habitat, we are glad to receive such testimonials. Happy to know that clients are happy with their homes even after several seasons.

We are staying in Dubai and we built a house (1650 sq. ft 4 BHK) near Koithoorakona, Pothencode. Thanks again for a beautiful house and all your support. Special thanks to Engineer Mr. Suresh Kumar. Hats Off to Habitat! - Jayakrishnan & Mini Jayakrishnan, Dubai



Thanks to Habitat for building "Sreeramam" - our 1500 sq. ft, single storied, 3-bedroom house. The house was aesthetically constructed in 2012 in our 2 acres of land at Anad near Nedumangad. - Mr. Adarsh V and Mini Adarsh



BAKER - ARCHITECT WHO WALKED AHEAD OF HIS TIME:SHANKAR

'BRICKMAN OF INDIA' REMEMBERED ON HIS 101ST BIRTHDAY

"Beyond simplicity and sustainability, Laurie Baker was an Architect of Happiness," said G Shankar, while delivering the remembrance talk to commemorate the 101st birthday of the legendary architect.

"A journey with Laurie Baker is very critical for any student of architecture. His buildings continuously engage us in conversations. He was the only architect, as far as I know, whose buildings manifest happiness, peace and contentment," Shankar elaborated at the commemoration organise by Habitat Technology Group at College of Architecture Trivandrum (CAT) Campus on 1st March 2019.

Among those invited to speak on the occasion were noted poet Neerada Suresh and the Rev Bishop Dr Samuel T Varghese, both of them Baker's clients. Also present at the event was architect George J Chittoor, who was fortunate to work with the legend during his engineering days.

Striking a personal note, Shankar said not only that Laurie Baker still remains a source of inspiration for him but also his vision and farsightedness had often helped him come out of moments of crises.

"It is very common for an architect to get into crisis at any time. Even at my age... with my experience I do get into crisis once in a while. I recharge myself by visiting one of Baker's constructions. His buildings continue to inspire people. It is very important to remember Baker because he was a legend who walked ahead of times. Decades before we started talking about sustainable architecture, Baker was experimenting the various techniques in each of his constructions," Shankar said.

Sharing the views of Shankar, the Rev Bishop Dr Samuel T Varghese, who got Baker to build his Palakveedu - Day Care for elderly people, and the House of God - a church, recollected how Baker had solved their water shortage problem faced by these projects located on a hilly site. Rain water harvesting was beautifully executed even before we heard about the term, he said.

Neerada Suresh shed light on the most often asked question about Laurie Baker as to why he chose to spend his life in Kerala. She recalled that when her house was completed, Baker brought his wife to have a look at his creation. She still remembers the excitement and the sparkle that filled Baker's eyes when he was showing Elizabeth Jacob, his wife, the unique features of the house. Neerada says it was nothing but his love for his wife that made him stay here.

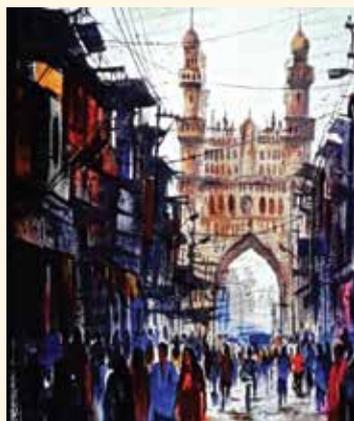
Neeraja Suresh House, Trivandrum



Remembrance Talk at CAT



Indian Coffee House, Trivandrum



G SHANKAR DELIVERS KEYNOTE SPEECH AT ASPAIRE 2019

G Shankar gave a keynote address at ASPAIRE 2019, a national conference on 'Smart Design in Heritage Precincts'. The conference was jointly organised by Ashoka School of Planning and Architecture and Ashoka Group of Institutions at The Park Hotel, Hyderabad.



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