



HOSTED & CURATED BY
THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Arcasia Student's Architectural Design Competition 2026

8th-12th September 2026

DELHI | AGRA | JAIPUR

ARCASIA STUDENTS' ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN COMPETITION 2026

Organized by the ARCASIA Committee on Architectural Education (ACAE)

Commissioned under the Indian Institute of Architects (IIA)

In conjunction with the 23rd ARCASIA Forum hosted and curated by the Indian Institute of Architects

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the ARCASIA Students' Architectural Design Competition is to provide a meaningful platform for students from ARCASIA Member Institutes to participate in ARCASIA activities and engage in critical architectural dialogue across the region.

The competition offers an opportunity for students from diverse cultural, climatic, and social contexts to exchange ideas and propose innovative design responses to a common issue raised by ARCASIA each year. It aims to encourage sensitivity to place, people, tradition, and sustainability while nurturing the next generation of architects in Asia.

For the 2026 edition, students are invited to explore how architecture can learn from and reinterpret vernacular knowledge systems for contemporary and future needs.

COMPETITION THEME

Bringing Back... Vernacular Wisdom

Across Asia, vernacular architecture has long reflected a deep understanding of climate, geography, materiality, culture, craftsmanship, and community life. From courtyard houses and shaded streets to bamboo structures, earthen settlements, timber systems, and water-responsive habitats, traditional built environments have evolved through generations of lived intelligence.

In the face of rapid urbanization, climate crisis, cultural homogenization, and the increasing dependence on universal building models, many of these indigenous and local architectural practices are being overlooked. As cities expand and construction becomes increasingly standardized, there is a growing need to revisit vernacular wisdom not as nostalgia, but as a source of knowledge for resilience, sustainability, identity, and innovation.

The theme “Bringing Back... Vernacular Wisdom” calls upon students to investigate how traditional architectural values and regional intelligence can inform contemporary design.

DESIGN PROBLEM

This edition of the competition adopts a problem-driven approach.

Central Guiding Question

How can vernacular wisdom inform scalable, climate-resilient architectural or community infrastructure solutions for contemporary Asia?

Students are required to develop design proposals that respond to this question through grounded, context-sensitive, and forward-looking architectural strategies. Entries should demonstrate how vernacular knowledge can be meaningfully reinterpreted to address present-day challenges across Asia.

ENTRY ELIGIBILITY

Any current full-time student studying in an Undergraduate Architecture programme accredited or recognized by the respective National Institute of Architects of ARCASIA Member Institutes shall be eligible to participate in the competition.

SCHEDULE

Description	Time
Announcement of Competition	15 April 2026
Submission Deadline for Member Institutes	10 June 2026 (23:59, UTC+5:30pm)
Submission of 3 Finalists from each Member Institute to IIA	30 June 2026
Final Judging & Announcement of Winners	30 July 2026
Declaration of Winners and Award Ceremony	11 September 2026

NATURE OF DESIGN PROPOSAL

Each entry must propose a clearly defined architectural or community infrastructure solution rooted in vernacular wisdom and relevant to contemporary Asian conditions.

The proposal may address typologies such as community space, learning space, cultural centre, housing intervention, public building, climate-responsive shelter, or other forms of community-oriented infrastructure, provided the response is specific, scalable, and aligned with the central design problem.

Submissions are expected to demonstrate:

- Local climate
- Materials and construction systems
- Social traditions and cultural practices
- Regional identity
- Environmental challenges
- Future relevance and scalability

SITE CRITERIA

All entries must be based on a clearly identified site within an Asian context.

Each submission must demonstrate:

- Site relevance: why this site has been selected
- Climatic relevance: the environmental and climatic conditions influencing the proposal
- Cultural relevance: the vernacular, social, and spatial traditions informing the design
- Context-specific challenges: the particular issue or issues the project is addressing

DELIVERABLES

Each submission shall include the following:

1. Presentation Board (Mandatory)

One A1 sheet (594 mm × 841 mm) in landscape format

The board must include:

- Site plan (clearly scaled)
- Plans, sections, and/or elevations (clearly scaled)
- Climatic response diagrams
- Vernacular strategy diagrams
- Concept diagrams and spatial organization
- Visualizations such as perspectives, axonometric views, or equivalent representational material

Note: All drawings must include scale indicators.

2. Design Statement

A Design Statement of maximum 500 words in PDF format.

It must clearly articulate:

- Design problem
- Site relevance
- Vernacular interpretation
- Environmental strategy
- Scalability

3. Entry Form

A duly completed and signed Entry Form in PDF format.

Submission Guidelines

- File format: PDF
- Maximum file size: 20 MB
- Resolution: minimum 300 dpi
- Language: English
- Identification: No identifying marks shall appear on the submission panels or Design Statement

Incomplete or non-compliant submissions may be disqualified.

INDIVIDUAL / TEAM SUBMISSION

Individual and team submissions are accepted. There is no limitation on the number of team members. However, each student is allowed to participate in one submission only, either individually or as part of a team.

ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF ENTRIES

No identification marks shall appear on the graphic layout or the Design Statement. Participants shall keep their entries confidential and take the necessary steps to ensure that the work is not disclosed to any third party throughout the competition process until the public announcement of results.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Intellectual Property Rights shall remain with the author(s). However, upon submitting an entry to the competition, the participant declares, warrants, agrees, and undertakes that the submission, including all intellectual property contained therein, may be used by the organizers for the promotion, publication, exhibition, and documentation of the event.

ENSURING COMPARABILITY

To ensure fairness and consistency across all submissions, all entries must adhere to common parameters, including:

- clearly defined project scale
- mandatory core drawings and diagrams
- explicit site and climate analysis
- alignment with the stated evaluation criteria

These common requirements are intended to strengthen the quality of submissions and enable a more rigorous and comparable review process.

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

The selected entries submitted by all National Institutes of Architects of ARCASIA shall be evaluated by the Jury Panel based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Time
Concept and overall design response	25%
Interpretation of vernacular wisdom	20%
Environmental and climatic response	20%
Feasibility and clarity of proposal	15%
Presentation quality and communication	20%

The decision of the Jury Panel shall be final and binding on all parties concerned and shall not be subject to appeal. Participants shall not have the right to request access to the Jury comments or adjudication records.

EXPECTATIONS OF DEPTH

This competition emphasizes rigor over representation.

Submissions are expected to demonstrate:

- strong contextual understanding
- depth of research
- critical, not superficial, use of vernacular knowledge
- relevance to contemporary challenges

The strength of an entry will depend not only on the quality of its visual presentation, but also on the depth, clarity, and authenticity of its architectural thinking.

PANEL OF JURORS

Ar. Umar Saeed, Chairman, ACAE – Head Juror

Ar. Mohamed Amdhan – Maldives Zone A

Dr. Ar. Rattapong Angkasith – Thailand Zone B

Ar. Sakata Izumi – Japan Zone C

Arcasia President's Nominated Representative (To be Confirmed)

Awards Committee

Ar. Shweta Balasubramoni- Convenor

Ar. Nishtha Pandey- Co-Convenor

AWARDS

Number of Prizes	Description
One Gold Award	Gold Medal and Certificate
One Silver Award	Silver Medal and Certificate
Three Bronze Awards	Bronze Medal and Certificate

EXHIBITION AND PUBLICATION OF ENTRIES

The organizer shall be entitled to display or exhibit, on any date and at any venue, the entries or any part thereof, and to publish the reports of the competition together with selected entries as part of the Forum documentation, catalogue, website, publications, and promotional materials.

LANGUAGE

All entries shall be submitted in English.

SUBMISSION AND ENQUIRY

All entries shall be submitted via email to the respective National Institutes of Architects on or before 10 June 2026.

Each Member Institute shall shortlist and forward three finalists to the host secretariat by 30 June 2026.

For further inquiries, please contact the official competition secretariat at the email address provided: sd2026.arcasia@gmail.com

Participants are advised to follow the ARCASIA website, official Forum updates, and ACAE communication channels for the latest information regarding the competition.

Submission of the three national winners' works for Student Design Competition 2026 shall be made to ACAE Chairperson's desk: Saeed.Umar@gmail.com, CC: sd2026.arcasia@gmail.com

GLOBAL POSITIONING

This competition positions itself as a response to urgent regional and global challenges.

It asks whether Asia's vernacular intelligence can inform future resilience, and whether local knowledge systems can generate scalable, contemporary solutions for architecture and community infrastructure.

Participants are expected to engage with this question not as an exercise in nostalgia, but as a forward-looking design agenda grounded in relevance, adaptability, and long-term impact.

SUGGESTED NOTE FOR PROMOTION

The ARCASIA Students' Architectural Design Competition 2026 invites students across Asia to re-examine the intelligence of traditional architecture and explore how vernacular wisdom can guide resilient, scalable, and contemporary design solutions for a rapidly changing world.

For any queries related to the competition, please write to:
sd2026.arcasia@gmail.com