DAIDA FOUNDATION GLOBAL URBAN THESIS AWARD COMPETITION : Edition 2025

Theme : **Public Infrastructure and Public Spaces**

24 Participating Institutions from South Africa, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Egypt, & India

submitted **44** theses proposing adaptive ideas for **29** cities across **08** countries

9 FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

DAIDA Foundation's vision of Public Infrastructure and Public Spaces

Cities are full of inequities. Social and environmental injustice decide the quality of many in the lower part of the socio-economic pyramid. Financial inequities exacerbate the problem.

It is through Public Infrastructure and Public Spaces that some of these inequities are addressed within cities. e.g. :

● Inclusive public transportation can allow poor and rich, old and young, women and men to commute to their work or leisure.

● Vibrant public spaces such as plazas and public squares allow those with little private space at home to lounge at ease

● Parks and urban forests and riverfronts allow all to refresh their lungs and more.

Most importantly Public Spaces and Public Infrastructure provide a chance for people from different social and economic strata to meet each other. For, in true public spaces and other manifestations of public infrastructure, ideally all citizens - whatever their place in the social or economic pyramid have the same rights.

Amid global challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, natural disasters, and urban decline, public infrastructure and spaces play a vital role. During crises such as floods, heatwaves, or pandemics, they offer adaptable infrastructure that supports emergency response and strengthens community resilience. Thoughtfully designed and managed public spaces are thus not only essential for environmental sustainability but also for enhancing the health, safety, and cohesion of urban communities.

DAIDA Foundation Global Urban Thesis Award, edition 2025, invites entries from students of Master's programs (*) to address inequities in cities through their research and / or design of Public Spaces and Public Infrastructure.

Eligible participants are Master program students with either design or research component in subjects related to cities and/or urban- environmental landscape. Thesis submitted in the academic year of Master Program 2023-24 and 2024-2025, will be eligible for submission in this competition.

To read details about the previous competition editions, please visit either www.myliveablecity.com and click on the tab – MLC Academy, or https://daida.myliveablecity.com/

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Competition Theme : **Public Infrastructure and Public Spaces**

Total cash reward Euros 20,000

1st PRIZE €6000

2nd PRIZE €5000

3rd PRIZE €4000

PRIZE

Jury will decide on the disbursement of the balance Euros 5000

Shyam Khandekar

Founder of DAIDA FOUNDATION is also the Chairman of its Board of Trustees.

He is an architect, urban-planner and urban-designer who has led multi-disciplinary design teams in major urban and landscape projects in Netherlands and India.

Shyam is also an author & editor. *My Liveable City* has published three books under his guidance: *Affordable Housing, Inclusive Cities, Designing For Sustainability Through Upcycling* and *Streets For All : 50 Ideas for Shaping Resilient Cities*, published in 2022, has been edited by him.

Liesl Vivier

Architect Urban Planner, Zimbabwe & The Netherlands,

DAIDA Foundation Board Member.

She is the deputy head of the Department of Urban Development in Almere, The Netherlands. She works as an urbanist on large-scale projects of urban regeneration.

Claudio Acioly Jr.

An architect and urban planner, a development practitioner with nearly 40 years of experience in more than 30 countries working as a practicing expert, program manager, resident technical and policy advisor or short-term consultant to governments, bilateral and multilateral organizations, academic institutions, civil society organizations and community-based organizations.

Acioly specialized in housing and slum upgrading. Throughout the years he worked intensively in the nexus housing and land policies-city development strategies, combining it with capacity building, programme development and policy implementation.

Ashim Manna

An urban designer and spatial planner with a decade of experience in smart cities, public-realm infrastructure, spatial analysis, and master planning. He has worked with international firms like AECOM and Building Design Partnership, as well as on collaborative projects across India. Currently pursuing doctoral research at KU Leuven's International Centre of Urbanism, Ashim's work focuses on global warming, infrastructure, and settlement transformation in the Indian Himalayas. He holds a Master in Urbanism and Spatial Planning from KU Leuven, Urban Design from CEPT University, and a Bachelor of Architecture from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Ashim also manages Research & Outreach for My Liveable City.

PARTICIPATING ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

For competition edition 2025, 24 Institutes across 6 countries, submitted
44 theses proposing adaptive ideas for 29 cities across 08 countries. 9 candidates shortlisted after jury review.

School of Planning and Architecture	Vijayawada, India
AIN Shams University	Cairo, Egypt
International Center for Urbanism, Katholieke Universiteit	Leuven, Belgium
Manipal School of Architecture and Planning	Manipal, India
The University of Cape Town	Capetown, South Africa
Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute for Architecture and Environmental Studies	Mumbai, India
R V College of Architecture	Bengaluru, India
Dr. Bhanuben Nanavati College of Architecture	Pune, India
Jamia Milia Islamia	Delhi, India
MEASI Academy Of Architecture	Chennai, India
College of Engineering	Trivandrum, India
BMS College of Architecture Dessign and Planning	Bengaluru, India
Goa College of Architecture	Goa, India
Delft University of Technology	Delft, Netherlands
Pillai College Of Architecture	Panvel, India
School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University	Chennai, India
VIT's Padmabhushan Dr. Vasantdada Patil College of Architecture	Pune, India
University of Stuttgart	Stuttgart, Germany
CEPT University	Ahmedabad, India
School of Planning and Architecture	Bhopal, India
Bharati Vidyapeeth College Of Architecture	Pune, India
School of Planning and Architecture	Mysore, India
Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport, College of Engineering & Technology - Heliopolis Branch	Heliopolis, Egypt
National Institute of Technology	Patna, India

JOHANNA LYDIA
SCHOOL OF PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE - VIJAYAWADA, INDIA

Master Program:
Master of Architecture (Landscape Architecture)

Thesis Name:
Reclaiming Abandoned Urban Landscapes for People and Nature: The Tirusulam Quarry at Chennai (India)

Mentored by:
Dr. Shanmuga Priya G

UMAR NAEEM
AIN SHAMS UNIVERSITY - CAIRO, EGYPT

Master Program:
Integrated Urbanism & Sustainable Design (IUSD MSc)

Thesis Name:
Beyond Green and Grey: Exploring the Socio-Environmental Dimensions of Urban Nature Transformations in Lahore (Pakistan)

Mentored by:
Prof. Dr. Mohammed Salheen; Prof. Dr. Leonie Fischer; Dr. Nida Rehman

SUPANUT UDOMSILAPRASUP
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR URBANISM, KU LEUVEN - BELGIUM

Master Program:
Master (of Science) Urbanism, Landscape and Planning

Thesis Name:
Reconfiguring "Wet Ideology" : Vernacular Adaptation and Modern Engineering Along the Mun River - Ubon Ratchathani (Thailand)

Mentored by:
Prof. Kelly Shannon

RISHAV PAUL
GOA COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE - GOA, INDIA

Master Program:
Masters of Architecture in Urban Design

Thesis Name:
Urban Design in the Age of AI : Past, Present, and Future—Human–AI Collaboration to Shape Panjim as a 'Collage City' (India)

Mentored by:
Dr. Vishvesh Kandolkar

ABIRAL BHUJU
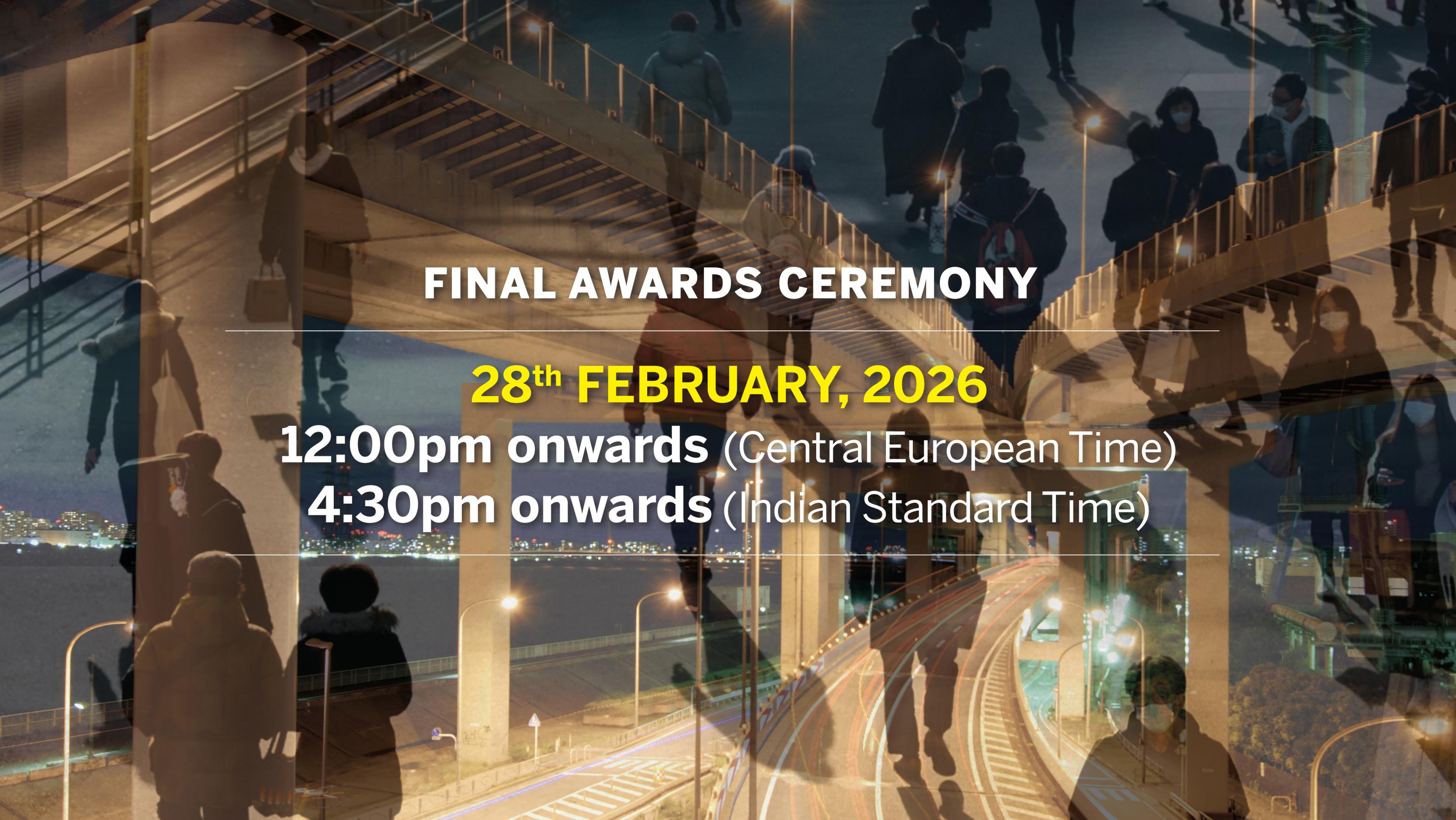UNIVERSITY OF STUTTGART - STUTTGART, GERMANY

Master Program:
M.Sc. Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design

Thesis Name:
Community Perspectives on Windhoek's Ephemeral Rivers : Engaging Local Knowledge for Sustainable Urban Design (Namibia)

Mentored by:
Prof. Dr. Leonie Fischer; Prof. Dr. Mohamed Salheen; Ms. Gaby Hansen

CHRISTINA SOEDIONO
DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY - DELFT, NETHERLANDS

Master Program:
Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences

Thesis Name:
Built on Shape Shifting Land : A Transition towards Amphibious Living - Sylhet (Bangladesh)

Mentored by:
Associate Prof. Nelson Mota

PRITAM CHAUDHARI
CEPT UNIVERSITY - AHMEDABAD, INDIA

Master Program:
Master of Architecture (Landscape Architecture)

Thesis Name:
THE NORTH NEXUS : An Ecological Framework for Valleys Urban Growth - Naggar, Himachal Pradesh (India)

Mentored by:
Dr. Deepa Maheshwari

PARNAVI HARDE
SCHOOL OF PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE - BHOPAL, INDIA

Master Program:
Master of Architecture (Urban Design)

Thesis Name:
Rethinking Publicness and Creating Equity in Development from the Lens of Spatial Justice: A Case of Contested Lakefront, Mill Lands and Public Engagement Spaces in the Heart of Nagpur (India)

Mentored by:
Assistant Prof. Vikram Kohli

KARIM M FAHMY
ARAB ACADEMY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & MARITIME TRANSPORT , COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY - HELIOPOLIS, EGYPT

Master Program:
Master of Science in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design

Thesis Name:
Intergroup Contact in Segregated Cairo: The Case of Digla Square in Al-Maadi, Cairo (Egypt)

Mentored by:
Dr. Mona Abdelwahab
Dr. Heba Eldeen

FINAL AWARDS CEREMONY

28th FEBRUARY, 2026

12:00pm onwards (Central European Time)
4:30pm onwards (Indian Standard Time)