

EDITOR'S CORNER

Travel more to learn more!

Routine makes heavy demands on us; it creates drudgery and makes life monotonous. We mostly allow our days to be ruled by our hectic work schedules. Days turn into years and years add up to a lifetime. Is there a way out to relieve the tedium even a little bit? Yes, there is. Break away from the routine once in a while and head to an exotic destination. It is a decision worth taking.

At Habitat, we make it a routine to break the routine and have made it a rule that we get away for 10-15 days in a year. This year, Habitat family journeyed to Egypt to experience the sights, sounds and tastes of the 'cradle of civilisation'.

We started our exploration of the Wonder that was Egypt from the ancient temple of Philae, dedicated to Goddess Isis. The temple complex originally stood at the First Cataract of the Nile in Upper Egypt. The massive structure was relocated to its present site of Agilkia Island in Aswan Low Dam, as a massive UNESCO-led project. The whole complex was shifted brick by brick and rebuilt without even slightly denting the original scheme and symmetry. It was a painstaking work, and it offers many lessons to an architect, especially on how well a priceless monument could be preserved.

Our guide, a polyglot with a sound understanding of the history of the Levant, explained in graphic details to us the salient features of each landmark he walked us through.

Our next stop was at the Coptic Museum, Cairo. This treasure house has the largest collection of Coptic Christian artefacts, besides delineating the long history of Egypt from the ancient past to modern times.

As we boarded our flight back home, I was ruminating on the unending timeline through which people came and went, rulers changed, systems altered and lifestyles transformed. Heritage structures such as huge pyramids, temple complexes and palaces and long columned courtyards, however, have survived the vagaries of time and tide. Cast in stone as immutable witnesses of fleeting time, they stand there to tell us about the past and human achievements.

After every travel, I get my experience quotient upgraded and refined. I come back with a better sense of the agonies and ecstasies of the great human journey. Beyond travel blogs and National Geographic documentaries, every journey helps you learn, unlearn and relearn many facets of human history. This is especially important in the case of an architect. I'm sure it is the same for most of us.



Warm regards,

G SHANKAR
FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN
HABITAT TECHNOLOGY GROUP

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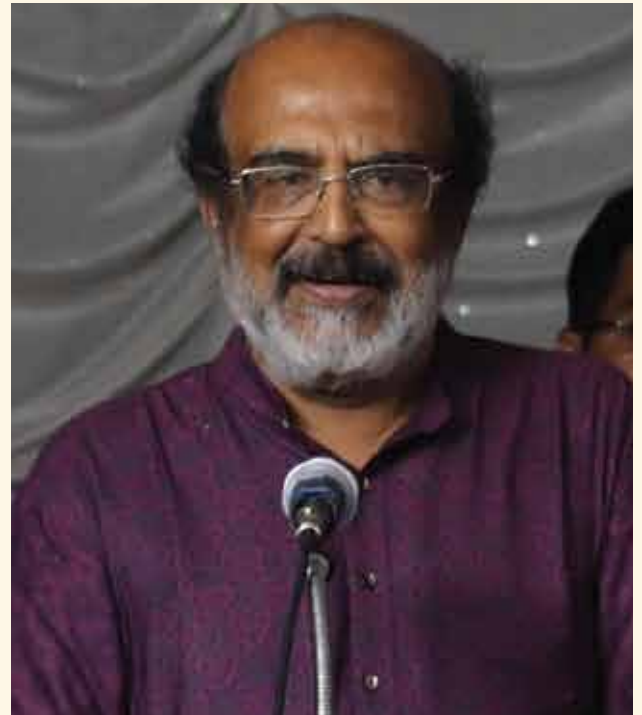
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**BAMBOO INSTITUTE
INAUGURATION**



Fifth of December was a day of pride for the Habitat Technology Group as Dr. T M Thomas Issac, Hon'ble Minister for Finance, inaugurated the Habitat Technology Group's Bamboo Training Centre (R&D) for Bamboo Build Design School at Mudavanmukal, Thiruvananthapuram. Dr. K. T Jaleel, Minister for Higher Education, inaugurated the hostel building located in the same complex on the occasion.

"Time and again sustainable infrastructure has been a point of discussion, but today the need for sustainability is more relevant than ever before considering the ecological crisis that the state is facing," Dr. Issac said.

The state is planning a huge investment of Rs 1.5 lakh crore for infrastructure projects for the next 10 years. The plan includes parallel railways, state highways and roads, schools, stadiums and hospitals. The basic feature of all these works will be that they totally adhere to the green protocol, the minister pointed out.

"Sustainability of the infrastructure is a matter of great concern, which is why the government is keen on adopting eco-friendly and alternative building technologies," he added.

Dr Jaleel elaborated on the need to adopt eco-friendly construction methods and rules which should be incorporated in the administrative policy of the state. "Habitat Technology Group, led by Dr G Shankar, is a trailblazer in application and promotion of alternative technology, and the state is proud of this," he noted.

On the occasion, Dr G. Sankar recalled that initially it was not easy to convince people and officials of the need to go in for sustainable methods. "Initially it was a lonely and tough battle for Habitat Technology Group. But the hope of being able to create a better tomorrow for the needy and the underprivileged kept us going," he said.

Reflecting on the progress of Habitat's emotional and physical journey, he said, "In 2006, Habitat made history by creating the largest earth building in the world – the 600,000 sq ft International Training Centre for Christian Commission for the Development of Bangladesh (CCDB) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. At the time we felt we had built a symbol or souvenir," Dr. Sankar said.

He remarked that the services of Habitat Technology Group in rebuilding home and hearth for people devastated by natural disasters have been unparalleled.



PHOTO FEATURE

Habitat family is a big one whose members include hundreds of engineers, design team, masons, contractors, workers, finance and administration staff and lot more. Some moments from this year's Habitat family Onam celebrations and tour to Egypt.

ONAM CELEBRATIONS



HABITAT FAMILY VISITS EGYPT



PROJECTS

HABITAT'S PAN-INDIA PROJECTS

A TRIBUTE TO MAHATMA GANDHI: ANANDA NIKETAN

Habitat has always been trusted by many for challenging projects it takes up. One such is 'Ananda Niketan', a rural school attached to Sewagram at Wardha in Maharashtra. The place has great historic relevance as it was first built by Mirabehn (Miss Slade), a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, as her residence and also for teaching spinning and carding to the villagers. Later, Gandhiji came to live in that cottage.



'Adi Nivas', the first hut where Bapu lived, was overcrowded. Gandhiji met guests and visitors from India and abroad in the cottage, which was also a witness to many historical moments associated with the freedom struggle. Even today, it follows the daily morning prayers as observed by Bapu. His wife Kasturba (Ba) also stayed here at that time. Later, a separate cottage was built for Ba where all the ladies who came to meet Gandhiji stayed. Bapu and Ba left for Mumbai on 2nd August 1942.

"It was a meditative journey. A place where Gandhiji spent 11 long years! On the other side of the road, the government is building up concrete monstrosities as part of a Rs. 625 crore project, which includes a shopping mall to sell rural products and to sell Mahatma to tourists," said Dr. Shankar, who had visited the ashram as part of the school project.

HABITAT'S SOCIAL INTERVENTION PROJECTS

Habitat Technology Group is supporting the beneficiaries of Pradhanmantri Awas Yojana in realizing their dream of a shelter. An initiative by Government of India, the Yojana works towards the target of building 20 million affordable houses by 31st March 2022. With the motto of "Shelter for All", Habitat has always been in the forefront in supporting governments across the globe as an advisory body as well as an executor of shelter projects.



THENMALA ECOTOURISM, KOLLAM



KERALA STATE LITERACY MISSION, HEAD OFFICE, PETTA, TRIVANDRUM



SBCID HEAD QUARTERS FOUNDATION STONE LAYING AT TRIVANDRUM



PUTHUMALA PROJECT SUBMITTED TO GOVERNMENT





HABLIFE LAUNCHED

HabLife, the official bimonthly newsletter of Habitat Technology Group, was launched at a seminar organised by Chintha Publishers at AKG Centre, Thiruvananthapuram on 3rd October 2019.

Er. Madhusoodhanan Nair of Habitat Technology Group presented a copy of HabLife to Prof. K.P. Kannan, Chairman, Laurie Baker Centre for Habitat Studies. Those present on the occasion included Ar. P B Sajan, Joint Director, COSTFORD.



Addressing the seminar, Dr Shankar said Kerala is located in Zone 3 in the disaster map. "We must be prepared for the possibility of disasters recurring. It is worth noting that disaster-prone places like Latur in Maharashtra, Anjar in Kutch and Uttarakhand also figure in the same category," he pointed out.

The seminar was held as part of the Annual Book Fest of Chintha Publishers.



ICON OF THE YEAR 2019 AWARD

On behalf of Padmasree Dr. G Shankar, his son Mr. Siddharth Gopal received the Icon of the Year 2019 award in the category Architect Brand in Sustainable Architecture, that was awarded to Habitat Technology Group. The award was instituted by TIME Cyber Media at a glittering function in Mumbai in early October.



CETA GALAXY CHARITABLE TRUST: MENTORING PROGRAM

CETA Galaxy Charitable Trust that works for the upliftment of financially challenged sections of Kerala Society, gave away scholarships up to Rs. 60,000 per year to more than 700 bright students at its Hope Empowerment Camp organized at Adoor on 14th September. Padmasree Dr. G Shankar distributed the scholarships at the function where other CETIANS shared the stage with him including Shri. Ashokan Shri. Satheesh, Shri Charles and Shri. Padmakumar.

CETA Galaxy Charitable Trust is formed with the intention of bringing together all Engineers from College of Engineering in Trivandrum under one umbrella and to channelise their expertise and resources for the betterment of our Society.



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