68TH YEAR
LOUIS I. KAHN TROPHY

National Association of Students of Architecture
Louis I. Kahn Trophy 2025-26
Catalyse

About NASA India

The National Association of Students of Architecture (NASA, India) is the world's largest architectural student-run organization. Founded in 1957 with just seven colleges, it has grown to include over 350+ colleges and more than 66,000+ students, making it a significant voice for architecture students across India. The association aims to provide a platform for learning and interaction among students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

NASA India functions as a non-profit and non-political organization. It is officially registered under the Societies Act of 1860, with its headquarters at the Department of Architecture, School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi.

NASA India organizes various events, programs, and competitions throughout the year. These include partnerships with organizations like HUDCO, GRIHA, and CPK for design trophies. There are 11 design trophies in total, with the Annual NASA Design Competition being the flagship trophy and offering students a platform to showcase their creative talents and design innovations. We have partnered with the Council of Architecture, India, for the Student of the Year trophy as well.

The association's flagship event is the Annual NASA Convention (ANC), the world's largest gathering of student architects. This event attracts over 4000+ students participating in workshops, masterclasses, and programs led by more than 200 esteemed architects. Additionally, there are regional Zonal NASA Conventions held annually.

NASA India's initiatives extend beyond traditional academics. The summer-winter school programs offer immersive experiences that enhance students' practical skills and broaden their educational horizons. The "Insider" initiative allows students to engage directly with experienced architects, gaining insights into office management and professional practice. This interaction fosters mentorship and provides valuable guidance. The Louis I. Kahn Documentation series aims to preserve and disseminate architectural knowledge by documenting significant but often overlooked sites.

NASA India hosts programs both nationally and internationally, in countries like Japan, Sri Lanka, the USA, and South Korea. These experiences provide students with enriching learning opportunities and enhance their networking capabilities.

The NEXUS is an informal meeting ground where students can form bonds, share ideas, and collaborate. It emphasizes learning, mentoring, and networking, allowing students to showcase their talents and develop new ideas with peers from around the globe. We have also expanded into podcasts with our Spotify exclusive, The Archade.

For more information, you can visit NASA India's website - https://www.nasaindia.co/
Our social media pages are @wenasaindia and @mynasaindia on Instagram.

CATALYSE

Catalyse - Our Annual Theme

For nearly seven decades, NASA India has stood as a movement - built by students & led by students. As we step into the 68th year of our association's existence, I call upon the stakeholders to honour the legacy not by looking back, but by asking what we can spark next.

NASA India has always been more than just an association. It's been a force: a surge of youthful energy, ideas, voices, and action. This year, we recognise and compound over the force for what it truly is.

In the grand reaction of change, whether in our built environments, our learning systems, or the profession itself, we, the students, are the accelerators. With over 66,000 students across the country, our numbers are not just statistics. They are the untapped potential of a generation ready to shape what's next. This year, we reflect on the immense power of coming together - not just to participate, but to instigate. A catalyst doesn't wait for change. It creates movement, breaks inertia, and opens new paths. **NASA India today stands not just as a platform for learning and collaboration, but as an agent of impact - nationally & globally.** One that ignites bold conversations, challenges outdated practices, and pushes the profession toward more inclusive, ethical, and relevant futures.

So what does it mean to catalyse?

It means taking responsibility.
It means using architecture as a lens to rethink society, equity, and the future.
It means challenging what no longer serves us.
It means questioning the boundaries of architecture and expanding its purpose.

This is a call to all students, designers, thinkers, makers, rebels:
Catalyse conversations, communities & the future.

Because this is our moment in the reaction.
Let's use it to spark something irreversible.

Come, let's **CATALYSE** the reaction that serves the greater good!

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Introduction

LOUIS I. KAHN TROPHY

Theme

Life flows like a river. It twists and turns in its journey. It flows like energy. It is constantly converging, diverging, overlapping, and intertwining to weave a pattern- the story. Architecture is a stage where this phenomenon unfolds spontaneously, following natural and dynamic ecosystems.

The five elements of this planet, Earth *(khiti)*, Water *(āpa)*, Fire *(tej)*, Air *(marut)*, Space *(Vyoma)*, together manifest and nurture human life. This has resonated in various ancient texts across different civilisations at different points in time. These elements, as forces, and their dynamic relationship, make human existence lively, functional, and vibrant. Architecture provides the stage for expressing and nurturing human life.

Here, the stage can be considered a metaphor for the physical entity of "Building envelopes". Envelopes, however, can be perceived as more than a limiter, controller, or mere protector. Building envelopes, in fact, moderate the convergence of the five elements Earth *(khiti)*, Water *(āpa)*, Fire *(tej)*, Air *(marut)*, Space *(Vyoma)*, catalysing human life to unfold, express, and conduct the everyday life within the "stage".

The learning phase of architecture needs to develop a keen observation of this "convergence of the five elements" and their dialogue, and of the building envelope as the moderator and catalyst. This can be captured, understood, and expressed through the representation of dots, lines, and planes - the alphabet of architecture. True learning happens when we sense the unseen and articulate it through those letters.

Here, Henry Lefebvre's conceptual triad can be relevant to understanding the logic of "production of space"

1. Spatial practice, which embraces production, reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space and each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance.
2. Representations of space, which are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations.
3. Representational spaces, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces)."

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Intent and Learning Objective

An ability shall be developed to interpret and articulate the built environment as a dynamic moderator of the five elemental forces Earth *(khiti)*, Water *(āpa)*, Fire *(tej)*, Air *(marut)*, and Space *(vyoma)*, by observing how these forces converge, diverge, overlap, and intertwine to shape human life. Through this understanding, the participants will be able to sharpen their analysis of building envelopes not merely as protective layers but as catalytic properties that control, moderate, mediate, energise, and enhance the lived experience.

This objective will be achieved by appropriately calibrating the participant's perception to sense the unseen interactions of elemental forces and by enabling them to express these interactions through the fundamental architectural representations of dots, lines, and planes.

The learning will also be further strengthened by applying Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad as a lens that connects the aspects of spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces. This will enable participants to understand the logic of the production of space as both a physical and a socio-symbolic phenomenon that unfolds through human activity, environmental forces, and architectural intent.

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The Task

The Design Challenge

The participants need to select a site or building constructed between the year 1850 and 1950 within the Indian subcontinent, where the architecture has resonated with and responded to at least two of the five elements. Understanding the interrelations among the five elements and how the building envelope is designed to catalyse, moderate, mediate, energise, and enhance the lived experience. The built-up area should be minimum 10 acres, not exceeding 30 acres, and the built entities must be in appropriate proportion to the total study area. Emphasis will be placed on the quality of documentation, the depth of analysis, while capturing the phenomena, and the richness of interpretation. That understanding will catalyse the architecture learning journey.

Submission Requirements

The Submission shall comprise of a **MAXIMUM OF 20 A2 SHEETS IN LANDSCAPE FORMAT ONLY.**
- Panel quality: Opaque
- Ink: Only black, no dilution of ink allowed
- Computer Aided Drawings only, no hand drawn drawings
- Jury shall happen online. Participants must ensure legibility and readability is maintained by choosing the right drawing scales and text sizes.

Architectural Documentation

- At least 2 A2 mandatory panels displaying the collected data.
- Minimum of 5 A2 mandatory panels for documentation drawings (Plan, Section, Elevation, etc.)
- Free hand sketches/hand drawings (should be digitally composed in the sheet)
- Axonometric/Isometric drawings (can be computer aided drawings)
- Use of satellite imagery allowed as a basis for analysis
- Photographs allowed (All satellite imagery, photographs (can be coloured image), sketches, and perspectives shall be in support of the document and not be stand alone and desirably in black and white)
- The drawings should be self-explanatory with as little text as possible.

Analysis

- At least 3 A2 mandatory panels to show case analysis.

Documentary

- Participants are required to submit a video documenting the structure documentation process only, covering the work from start to finish (site recording, measurements, sketches, drawings, and related documentation activities). The video should clearly present the methodology adopted for documenting the structure.
- The video duration must be a minimum of 2 minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes. It must be uploaded to YouTube as an unlisted video, and the link must be submitted along with the final entry at the time of submission. Public or private links will not be accepted.

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Field Notes

- Final Documentation drawings shall be accompanied by a set of field notebooks showing the hand drawn drawings /sketches over which measurements were first recorded.
- These are mandatory and are to act as a supplement to the formal documentation.
- The notebook should be bound in to A4 sized Notebook of 20 pages maximum only.
- All pages should clearly mention the date of recording of the documentation, descriptive title.
- The hand drawn sheets, if need be, can be photocopied / scanned and bound together in sequence with the A4 graph pad.
- Avoid retracing drawings for submission purposes.
- Please make sure to scan the notes clearly or it wouldn't be considered for evaluation.

References / Suggested Readings:

1. Lefebvre, Henri, and Donald Nicholson-Smith. The production of space. Oxford, OX, UK: Blackwell, 2017.
2. Rapoport, Amos. The meaning of the built environment: A nonverbal communication approach. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990.
3. Gehl, Jan. Life between buildings, 2012.
4. Hillier, Bill. Space is the machine: A configurational theory of architecture. London: Space Syntax, 2007.
5. Lobell, John. Louis Kahn: Architecture as philosophy. New York, NY: Monacelli Press, 2020.
6. Habraken, N. J., and Jonathan Teicher. The structure of the ordinary: Form and control in the built environment. Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T. Press, 2000.
7. Desai, Miki. Teaching basic design in architecture: Exercises, illustrations, examples Kottayam, Kerala State, India: DC Books : DC School of Architecture & Design, 2022.
8. Colomina, Beatriz, and Mark Wigley. Are we human?: Notes on an archaeology of Design. Zürich, Switzerland: Lars Müller Publishers, 2024.
9. Penrose, Roger. Shadows of the mind: A search for the missing science of Consciousness. London: Vintage, 2005.
10. Gleick, James. Chaos: Making a new science James Gleick. London: Cardinal, 1988

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Guidelines

Checklist for submission

Failing to comply with any of the guidelines may lead to disqualification at the discretion of the executive council.
1. Online Submission of **Sheets** in form of **PDF** (25MB or below only)
2. Online Submission of **YouTube Video** link (2-3 Minutes Max duration)
3. Online submission of **Field Notes** in form of **PDF** (25MB or below only)
4. Original Copy of **Authentication Letter** (10MB or below only)
5. Original Copy of **Declaration Letter** (10MB or below only)
6. Editable Format of the Sheets (Applicable if shortlisted)

Important Information

- Maximum One (01) Entry Will Be Accepted Per College For Louis I. Kahn Trophy.
- Queries to be put forward through the trophy page on the website (https://www.nasaindia.co/Trophy?groupid=1&trophyid=MXhZejEyMyFAlw==)
- Registration should be done by the Unit secretary in NASA India website before the registration deadline strictly.
- Registration of the trophies will be final and cannot be changed or withdrawn henceforth.
- Late Registration and submission will not be entertained and henceforth the defaulters shall be disqualified.
- Submission to be done through the trophy page on the website (https://www.nasaindia.co/Trophy?groupid=1&trophyid=MXhZejEyMyFAlw==)

Sheet & NASA India Logo Guidelines

Failing to comply with any of the guidelines may lead to disqualification at the discretion of the executive council.
- NASA India Internal Logo shall always be placed on the right-hand bottom corner of the sheet.
- NASA India logo should not be merged, overlapped etc. with any sort of text, graphic, image, etc.
- NASA India logo should be in true black with a perfectly white background.
- NASA India External Logo, and the 68th Year Annual Theme Logo shall be placed in the start of the video, the link to the clip - https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1BQK7beT3hAxlMYu5TzNZ4d_LfGKnMMGL?usp=sharing

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Landscape orientation only

The templates to be followed is available at: @Sheet & video Template @Authentication Letter & Declaration Letter

General Submission Guidelines

Failing to comply with any of the guidelines may lead to disqualification at the discretion of the executive council.

- All text should be in English.
- The projects should use the decimal metric system and contain a metric graphic scale in order to enable publication in reduced formats. The format of the sheets should clearly mention the name of the trophy followed by the year i.e., **"Louis I. Kahn Trophy 2025-2026"**
- The format of the sheet should contain a square box of 25mm*25mm at the bottom right-hand corner, next to the NASA INDIA logo which should have the unique registration number allotted to the participants after registrations.
- 10MM White margin is to be left on all sides of A2 sheets.
- The scale is left to the discretion of the participant(s) to the condition that the scale should be in metric system and all the drawings should be clear and legible.
- Manually rendered entry should be scanned at least in 300*300dpi (dots per Inch) resolution.
- **The soft copy (non-editable format) of the sheets along with authentication letter, declaration letter and any other required documents prescribed in the submission requirements should be uploaded on the website by the submission deadline.**
- The soft copy file of the sheets should not be corrupted or incomplete or in low resolution.
- It is mandatory to produce the original copy of the Authentication Letter for each entry(entry code should be mentioned if allotted) with the name of participant(s) and stating the unit will abide by whatever may be the final results and also agree that this entry is a property of both the institute and NASA India.
- **The Authentication Letter should be signed by the HOD/Principal/Director of the unit. Failing to which the entry will be strictly disqualified.**
- It is mandatory for the colleges to produce the original copy of the Declaration Letter for each entry(entry code should be mentioned if allotted) signed by the participants stating the work submitted is genuine and they have endorsed copy- rights for the same and to adhere by all the rules and regulations, jury process and the results.
- **Authentication & Declaration formats to be followed are available in the drive link** - https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mschiSd0GIM4gjzg5914bdkUi54ZzluS?usp=sharing
- The Prize Money Authenticating Letter signed by the Director/ Principal/HOD in the college letterhead specifying the account details (Account Name, Account Number, Bank Name, IFSC Code) in which the money is to be credited for each entry (entry code should be mentioned if allotted) shall be collected at a later stage.
- The working files in editable formats of the Shortlisted Entries should be submitted to the Council, failing which, the submission requirements would be deemed incomplete leading to the prize money being withheld.
- Shortlisted Entries with manual hand-done sheets should submit high quality scans(min. 300*300dpi) along with the content in a word document of the shortlisted entries should be submitted to the Council, failing which, the submission requirements would be deemed incomplete leading to the prize money being withheld.
- **Any disclosure of a college's identity through any method or medium will result in disqualification.**

Important Dates

Release of Brief:
21th February 2026, Saturday

Queries Deadline:
12th March 2026, Thursday 1800 hrs IST

Registration Deadline:
12th March 2026, Thursday 1800 hrs IST

Submission Deadline
10th April 2026, Friday 1800 hrs IST

Prize Money

Prize money of 2 Lakh INR is allotted

The prize money will be divided according to the number of Citations and Special Mentions based on the jury.

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Moderator

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a worldwide non-governmental organization founded in 1965 dedicated to the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places.

It works through a global network of professionals and experts to apply scientific techniques to the preservation of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, offering technical assistance and playing a key role in evaluating World Heritage sites for inscription on the World Heritage List.

Supported By

Development and Research Organisation for Nature, Art and Heritage Foundation (DRONAH Foundation)

Dronah Foundation, steering DRONAH's charitable and not-for-profit activities in the field of built heritage, community and environment, was established on March 21, 2012. The associated professionals from various disciplines promote social and cultural activities in their individual fields and recognise the need of mutual interaction with people from other fields for this purpose

All the Best !

Don't forget to follow our social media handles!
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www.nasaindia.co