

## Mumbai-based architect wins international award

**HT Correspondent, Hindustan Times, Mumbai** | Updated: Oct 02, 2016 01:02 IST

Mumbai-based architect and urban planner, PK Das, has won the prestigious Jane Jacobs International Medal 2016. The medal recognises Das' work in revitalising open spaces in Mumbai, particularly the city's waterfront, rehabilitating slums and initiating participatory planning process in the urban set-up.

Das will be honoured on October 17 in Quito, Ecuador coinciding with the United National Habitat III Conference. He will also receive a cash prize of US \$100,000. Created by The Rockefeller Foundation in 2007 and administered by The Municipal Art Society of New York, the medal is awarded to “..an individual who creates new ways of seeing and understanding cities and challenges traditional assumptions about urban life..”

This is the first time that the medal is being awarded to international nominees, a press statement by The Rockefeller Foundation states.

Actively involved in the larger movement to reclaim public spaces and protect Mumbai's natural areas, including the coastline, Das has also been passionate about housing for the poor and middle-class. He believes in the concept of “right to city” where citizens should be involved in every aspect of urban planning.

Das said, “The growth of the cities have also resulted in creating backyards of neglect, filth and discrimination, be it the form of slums, exclusion in urban planning or the misuse of natural areas. My mission is to integrate and re-connect these disparate backyards to create an inclusive, unified city. ”

His notable works include the development and restoration of the Carter Road promenade and Bandra Bandstand Seafront. At Carter Road, the development regenerated the mangroves which was used a dumping ground earlier. Bandstand continues to be known as a prominent cultural space in the city.

Darryl D'Monte, President of the Bandra West Residents Association (BWRA), who has worked with Das on several projects said, “The projects that we undertook in Bandra were all in collaboration with citizens. Celebrate Bandra as a festival gained prominence after the restoration of the two promenades and the Bandra Fort.”

Along with actor-politician Shabana Azmi , Das has also set up the Nivara Hakk Suraksha Samiti to work constructively towards slum rehabilitation. The Samiti is involved in the rehabilitation of slum-dwellers from the Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

His firm, PK Das & Associates has also undertaken the project of redevelopment of 17 plots housing conservancy workers of BMC.

Recently, he played an instrumental role in forming the Apna Mumbai Abhiyaan, a collaboration of 37 citizen organisations' in the city. The Abhiyaan has objected to the Coastal Road project fearing its environmental consequences. Das recently also wrote a strong critique on the Development Plan (DP) 2034.