



## THE BIHAR MUSEUM

### Written and Contributed by

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The Bihar Museum was won in an international competition and is the only government project to be built through an architectural competition post-independence. The design and execution process involved a collaboration between the Bihar State Government, Maki and Associates, Tokyo and Opolis Architects, Mumbai.

### What is the project about?

The Bihar Museum was won in an International Competition in late 2011 based on a brief prepared by Lord Cultural Resources, Toronto – the Master Planning Consultants. The prime mission of the new museum was *“to celebrate the rich ancient past and inculcate a sense of pride in present-day Bihari’s”*.

The Bihar Museum covering 24,000 square metres includes:

- a. Public, Education and Social Spaces.
- b. Permanent Collection Galleries and a Temporary Exhibition Gallery.
- c. A Special Children’s Gallery.
- d. Collection Storage and Support Spaces.
- e. Staff Work Areas and Building Support Spaces.

Maki and Associates/Opolis' design for the Bihar Museum creates an engaging and a well-scaled response to a prominent site and an ambitious, multi-faceted museum program. The Museum houses a rich variety of treasures from the region and includes event and education space that nurture a newfound sense of pride and connection to Bihar's storied history.

The generous 5.3 hectares (13.5 acres) plot along Patna's Bailey Road allowed for a variety of site planning approaches while demanding sensitivity to its low-scale surroundings and striking tree growth. In response to this context, the architects conceived the Bihar Museum as a "campus" – an interconnected landscape of buildings and exterior spaces that maintains a modest but dynamic profile, in harmony with existing site conditions.

Each program zone (entrance/event, museum exhibition, administration, and children /educational) has been given a distinct presence and recognizable form within the complex. These zones are linked together via interior and exterior courtyards and corridors, ensuring that all spaces retain a connection to the surrounding landscape while remaining sheltered and comfortable throughout the year.

This constant presence of the natural environment within the Museum "campus" creates a rich, unique experience with each visit, one that changes with time and seasons. It is hoped that this will encourage repeat visitors and together with world-class permanent and temporary exhibits – ensure that the Bihar Museum has a lasting educational impact for the children of Bihar and other visitors from across the world.

### **What is the impact?**

The creation of Bihar Museum to an international operative standard is a significant stepping stone for future public projects in this country. The positive experience of working with Bihar Government highlights that state governments do function with good intention towards its people. There is a hope that this project is seen as a benchmark for the future government-led public projects, not only in its design but in its execution and bureaucratic involvement too. The keen involvement of the government kept the design team engaged throughout the process, at the end of which

the completed museum was realized within a period of 5 years with an escalation of less than 2% from the stipulated project cost.

Bihar Museum has been awarded the GRIHA provisional 5 Star rating for its excellence in green building design. GRIHA is an acronym for Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment. GRIHA is a performance-oriented rating tool to evaluate the environmental performance of a building holistically over its entire life cycle, thereby providing a definitive standard for a 'green building'. This tool has been adopted by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India.

On an average day, 2500 people visit the museum.

### **Project Funded by**

The project was funded by the State Government of Bihar for architectural and exhibition design.

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Client:

Department of Art, Culture, and Youth (DACY), Government of Bihar, India.

Design team:

Maki and Associates:

Fumihiko Maki, Principal

Tomoyoshi Fukunaga, Director

Michel van Ackere, Associate

Tatsutomo Hasegawa, Associate

Hisashi Nakai

Yoshihiko Taira

Issei Horikoshi

Kiwon Kim

Opolis Architects:

Rahul Gore, Principal

Sonal Sancheti, Principal

Tejesh Patil, Project Architect

Rahul Lawhare

Swapnil Kangankar

Akul Modi

Consultants:

Programming / Master Planning / Exhibition Design: Lord Cultural

Resources (Mumbai / Toronto)

Structural:

Mahendra Raj Consultants Private Limited (New Dehli)

MEP:

Design Bureau (Mumbai)

Landscape:

Ohtori Consultants Inc. Environmental Design Institute (Osaka)  
and Forethought Design Consultants (Pune)

Lighting:

AWA Lighting Designers (Mumbai / New York)

GRIHA Consultant (Green Consultant): Environmental Design  
Solutions (New Delhi)

General Contractor:

Larsen & Toubro Construction.

**About Maki and Associates and Opolis:**

Maki and Associates is an internationally recognized architectural firm based in Tokyo, Japan and involved in projects worldwide. The firm was founded in 1965 and provides comprehensive architectural design services ranging from urban design and master planning, site planning and feasibility studies, facilities programming, architectural building and facade design, and interior design (including furniture, graphics, and lighting). Maki and Associates is actively led by its founder and principal, Fumihiko Maki.

Architects Rahul Gore and Sonal Sancheti started \_Opolis, a multidisciplinary design practice, in January 2001. Bringing their aesthetic strengths, technical expertise, creative inclinations and artistic vision to the table, the duo has made \_Opolis one of the leading architectural firms in the country. \_Opolis has offices in Mumbai and Pune and has several achievements to their credit.

\_Opolis was part of the Indian team that won acclaim at the International Urban Design Competition for the Design of Sustainable Cities hosted by Japan at the World Gas Conference in June 2003. Opolis has recently completed the Bihar Museum, Patna project – won as an international competition along with Maki and Associates. \_OPOLIS in collaboration with Steven Holl

Architects, New York won the competition for Extension to the Bhauji Daji Lad Museum at Byculla, Mumbai. More recently, Maki and Associates and \_OPOLIS teamed up once again to win the Amaravati Capital City Complex competition.

**Links to read more:**

[The Bihar Museum Website](#)