



INTACH
DELHI CHAPTER

Weekly News Clippings – 2016

Editor's Note

Lotus Temple backs out of heritage site race
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NDMC to make documentary on Lodhi Garden's flora and fauna soon

Source: The Times of India (14th August, 2016)

Lotus Temple backs out of heritage site race

In another blow to Delhi's ambitions, the Lotus Temple's world heritage site bid has been withdrawn. The nomination bid was halted by the temple's trustees, National Assembly of Bahais (NAB), as there were concerns that the Unesco inscription might hurt development work in the complex, said sources.

The move came as a setback for the AAP government, which had strongly pitched for Lotus Temple as the fourth world heritage site in the city. While the NAB did not comment on the issue, sources in heritage conservation body Intach, that was preparing the nomination dossiers for the temple, also known as Bahai house of worship, confirmed that the bid would not go through.

"It has been conveyed to us in writing that the NAB doesn't wish to go ahead with the world heritage nomination for Lotus Temple as it would affect development work. We have no option but to stop the process," Intach convener AGK Menon said.

Sources said the decision was taken after a series of meetings with the Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC) over a proposal to build a meditation centre in the complex. The NAB was concerned that a world heritage inscription could lead to government interference in the temple and become an impediment to its development plans.

The decision was then conveyed to Intach. Tourism minister Kapil Mishra, who had strongly pitched for the bid, said the government would discuss the issue with the temple trustees.

"Lotus Temple is the property of the NAB and we want it to get the world heritage inscription. If there is some concern from their side, we will talk to them and try to resolve it," the minister said. He, however, added that "ultimately it is the decision of the NAB; if it chooses not to go ahead with the world heritage bid, we cannot do anything".

The NAB had moved a proposal with DUAC last month for some construction work within the complex. "They wanted to build a meditation centre in the temple complex and came to us with a proposal. But we could not accept it, as we felt it would interfere with the composition of the complex," said DUAC chairperson professor PSN Rao.

"We wanted them to change the proposal and move the meditation centre away from the complex so that it doesn't disturb the overall composition. We also suggested that the centre be partially underground and camouflaged with plantation and earth mounds. The temple trustees have now come up with a new proposal and revised drawings," he said.

Link: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Lotus-Temple-backs-out-of-heritage-site-race/articleshow/53701829.cms>

Source: NDTV (14th August, 2016)

Delhi Needs 44 Small Dams, 480 New Waterbodies: Study

Delhi needs to develop 44 small dams in forest areas and 480 new waterbodies to recharge the depleting groundwater table, besides making it mandatory for residential and commercial complexes measuring 500 square metres or more to have rainwater harvesting facilities, a study commissioned by the AAP government has said.

The study has also recommended that the city's storm water drains should have soft beds instead of cemented ones and toe weirs at intervals.

Delhi Irrigation Minister Gopal Rai has asked all stakeholders to give their comments within a month so that suggestions can be incorporated in the report for acceptance and implementation.

The Minister had ordered the study on recharge of ground water in the national capital five months ago. His department then assigned Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), which has expertise in conducting such surveys, to conduct the study.

As per the report, water harvesting should be made mandatory in residential and commercial plots measuring 500 sq metre or more.

"Government should also ensure 100 per cent collection of solid waste with no dumping in drains, ponds, depressions.

Link: <http://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/delhi-needs-44-small-dams-480-new-waterbodies-study-1444048>

Source: The Times of India (11th August, 2016)

Checks & balances begin for Heritage line

On Wednesday, Delhi Metro began trial run on the 5.17km-long ITO-Kashmere Gate section of the Violet line. This stretch is an extension of the currently-operational Escorts Mujesar-ITO corridor.

After the commissioning of this stretch, the 9.37km-long Central Secretariat-Kashmere Gate section will become a part of the 43.40km-long Escorts Mujesar-Kashmere Gate Violet line corridor. "This corridor is also being extended to Ballabhgarh from Escorts Mujesar (3.2km)," said a Delhi Metro official.

During the trial run, checks will be done to ensure there is no blockage when the line becomes operational. "The entire signalling system will undergo rigorous testing," said Mangu Singh, MD, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, who kicked off the trial run. The response of the train at different speeds, braking and interconnection with the operations control centre (OCC) will also be monitored. The behaviour of the track system and the overhead electrification (OHE) will be checked.

This section of the Violet line consists of Delhi Gate, Jama Masjid, Lal Quila and Kashmere Gate stations. DMRC has tied up with INTACH for installing artworks and panels at the stations.

The Kashmere Gate station will become the first interchange facility to provide interconnectivity between three corridors: Violet, Red and Yellow lines. Officials said this stretch will also help in decongesting interchange stations like Rajiv Chowk and Central Secretariat. Commuters can switch to the Violet or Yellow line directly from Kashmere Gate.

After the commissioning of this section, residents of Faridabad, Govindpuri, Kalkaji, Nehru Place, East of Kailash, etc., will be able to travel directly to Old Delhi and vice-versa.

Link: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Checks-balances-begin-for-Heritage-line/articleshow/53642418.cms>

Source: Hindustan Times (15th August, 2016)

NDMC to make documentary on Lodhi Garden's flora and fauna soon

Getting to know more about the Lodhi Garden and the flora and fauna in it will soon become that much easier.

The New Delhi Municipal Council will make a documentary film on this landmark, the trees in it and the birds, butterflies and bees, which frequent this favourite spot for joggers, revellers and tourists alike. Though the idea is in its initial stages, NDMC officials want to make the film world-class, "like a documentary one sees on an international nature or animal TV channel".

"The idea is to showcase the natural beauty of this place. The different species of trees which you can find here as well as the many types of birds which take shelter in this oasis in the middle of an urban setting," NDMC chairman Naresh Kumar said.

The garden was established in 1936 and named as Lady Willingdon Park. It was after Independence that it got its present name. In 1968, further development and beautification was done by architect JA Stein.

Spread over 90 acres, it brings together heritage with rare bird and insect species. Structures protected by Archaeological Survey of India such as Mohammed Shah's Tomb, Tomb of Sikandar Lodi, Shisha Gumbad and Bara Gumbad are housed here. These monuments (tombs) were built between 1433 and 1533 AD in village Khairpur.

According to the official, the plan is to make a 7-10 minute documentary, which will do justice to the beauty of this place. "We will make it as good as a nature or animal show one sees on TV. With the right professionals and technology, we can properly showcase the beauty of this site," Kumar said.

The Lodhi Garden has a national bonsai park, herbal garden, bamboo garden, butterfly zone, lotus and lily pond and the tallest (35.5m) tree in Delhi, Buddha Coconut. The rose garden, which has been developed on two acres between gate No. 3 and 4, has around 5,000 plants. The palm corner has been developed on two acres and has Cycas, Fishtail Palm, Dak Palm, Erica Palm, China Palma, Cane and Bottle Palm, among others.

Birders say the move will help document the different avian species frequenting Central Delhi. "Lodhi Garden is famous for old architectural monuments and has emerged as a favourite haunt for morning walkers and picnickers. However, it is also a good birding spot for birdwatchers and nature lovers due to the vast green coverage provided by old trees, bushes and grassland in the heart of Delhi. This short film is an encouraging step," Ecologist and conservationist TK Roy said.

Birders say this move will help document the different avian species frequenting Central Delhi. "Lodhi Garden is a good ecosystem which was built way back in the Mughal era. This short film is an encouraging step on the part of the authorities. This will help in documentation of the different bird species coming to this green oasis," wildlife expert and an avid birder Surya Prakash said.

An ecological heaven:

Terrestrial Birds: Black Kite, House Crow, Rufous Treepie, Indian Grey Hornbill, Common Myna, Brahmini Starling, Asia Pied Starling, Black Drongo, Asian Koel, Lesser Goldenback, Common Tailorbird, Spotted Owlet, Red-vented Bulbul, Indian Robin, Magpie Robin, Common Pigeon, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Common Hoopoe, Coppersmith Barbet, Brown-headed Barbet, Jungle Babbler, Eurasian Colored Dove, Laughing Dove, Purple Sunbird

Seasonal migratory Birds: Jacobin Cuckoo, Rosy Starling, Common Hawk Cuckoo, Bluethroat

Water Birds: Spot-billed Duck, Indian Cormorant, Indian Moorhen, White-throated Kingfisher, Red-wattled Lapwing, Little Grebe, Little Egret, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Indian Pond Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron

Seasonal Migratory Water Birds: Common Coot, Common Teal

Trees:

Main tree species: Arjun, Champa, Neem, Jamun, Semal, Amaltas, Moulshree, Peepal, Bargad, Kachnar, Kusum, Gulmohar, Sheesham, Putranjiva, Ashok, Shahtoot, Silver oak, Magnolia, Augusta, Karanj, Sirris, Bistendu

New Tree Species: Sita Ashok, Mahogani, Ritha, Sterculias, Tabebuia avellendi

Link: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi/ndmc-to-make-documentary-on-lodhi-garden-s-flora-and-fauna-soon/story-BfWuVCp9EzQRIEVuGmwSI.html>

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