



INTACH

DELHI CHAPTER

Weekly News Clippings – 103

2nd June – 8th June

Editor's Note

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4 BIODIVERSITY PARKS GET GREEN SIGNAL

There's good news for the capital on World Environment Day. At a time when city's green cover is battling infrastructure expansion, Delhi is likely to get more green lungs. In a proposal aimed at reviving the bio-heritage of the city, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is planning to set up four biodiversity parks, including one in the Northern Ridge. Spread over large tracts of land, these parks will be combined with existing heritage sites.

The four parks are set to come up in Northern Ridge, Yamuna riverfront, Neela Hauz and Tilpath Valley near Asola wildlife sanctuary. DDA spokesperson Neemo Dhar said: "A proposal has been made for four biodiversity parks, which are expected to revive the old eco-systems of the city and contain pollution levels." All four parks are in the planning stage, say sources, though work is expected to take off sometime by the end of the year. Helping DDA in the project will be Delhi University's botany department.

The two largest ones are most likely to be the Northern Ridge Park — spread over 87 hectares — and the one on the Yamuna riverfront. The site for the riverfront will see a body of interlinked pockets of biodiversity parks on both sides of the river. DDA's first biodiversity park, the Yamuna biodiversity Park, was built over 457 hectares two years ago. Plans for the park in the Northern Ridge include reviving the water harvesting sites in the region, along with identifying the ecozones and green habitats available. DDA also wants to link the seven identified heritage structures in this area, in the form of walkways. These include two guard houses, a flagstaff tower that's a signal monument dating back to 1857, several 14th Century structures like Chauburja mosque and Pir-Ghaib, a British era Mutiny memorial and the third century BC Ashoka Pillar. Sources said these walkways will serve as both nature and heritage trails. The Tilpath Valley Biodiversity Park will be built with an eye on reviving and restoring springs, as it's a major catchment area and a ground water recharging zone. Grasslands will also be developed here so as to protect the zone. The plan here is to develop the park along with the sanctuary into a forest ecosystem having hilltops, slope and valley forest characteristics of the Aravallis. A nature trail along the periphery with a few walkways that cut across these formations will also be developed. DDA also proposes to carve out a green space in the Neela Hauz area over 5 acres. The land will later be integrated with the Sanjay Van and made into a reserve forest land. Here, the woodlands with nature trails will be developed near human settlements for recreational purposes, claims the DDA. Sources added that encroachments, which are present at the moment, will be removed soon.

SOURCE

5th June 2009, Times of India

HERITAGE BUILDINGS CHANGE WITH TIME

Encroachment on land belonging to the Delhi Development authority (DDA) is nothing new, but this time round heritage monuments have been encroached on in Mehrauli area. Bagichi Masjid, housing the Majar of Bab Ajam Shah, in DDA's Mehrauli Complex will soon be notified as a protected monument by the state archaeological department. But when HT visited the place, we saw that a stone wall had been painted over white and green and the insides have been turned into living quarters with nails for curtains and electric wires drilled in to the fabric of the late Mughal era structure. One Imam Ibrahim teaches 20 children there. "This is a madrassa. We are staying here since the last 10 months. I am a salaried employee of the Delhi Waqf Board", Ibrahim said. But Waqf Board officials sought to distance themselves. Consultants to Delhi Waqf Board Jamil Murtja said, "We have asked them only to offer namaz and not to stay there. We will take action if we get any complaint". One more unprotected monument-Takya of Kamli Shah-in the neighbourhood has met the same fate. This structure situated atop a small hillock on the outskirts of Mehrauli village while going from the Dadadham Jain temple side, has been altered drastically and only a small stone arch remains as evidence of the late Mughal era structure. Incidentally, both the DDA and Delhi Waqf Board have put up signs side by side, claiming 'trespassers would be prosecuted'. In both cases, DDA officials hardly seem to be bothered. "The Waqf Board has laid claim on the land and we are getting it clarified from the local revenue records," is all that a DDA Horticulture official said. Concerned over the degradation and the increased encroachment in the area, prominent residents of the area-photographer Raghu Rai and his conservation architect wife Gurmeet Rai last month wrote to Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit. "It is not just an issue of encroachment but damage to heritage monument.

SOURCE

3rd June 2009, Hindustan Times

NEW DELHI MARKETS TO WEAR A NEW LOOK

Riding on the wave of the upcoming Commonwealth Games in the Capital, several projects for redevelopment of ageing markets in the New Delhi Municipal Council area that were long gathering dust in the offices of the civic body have now got a new lease of life. The civic body has already completed makeover of the Tibetan market and the adjoining Janpath main market and now work is under way at Yusuf Zai market in the outer circle of CP. Next in the pipeline is restoration of Gole Market and redevelopment of Shankar Market, Palika Bazar, and Bengali Market and Sarojini Nagar market among others. The nature of work undertaken at these markets mainly comprises outer façade restoration of the shops, disciplining of shop signboards, changing the corridor flooring to a uniform pattern and making necessary changes to arrive at an orderly and homogeneous look to the building exterior instead of the present haphazard arrangement in place at all the markets. Urban planner and INTACH Delhi Chapter head A.G.K Menon on the other hand maintained that beautification of buildings should not be done at the cost of losing the authenticity of historical structures.

SOURCE

8th June 2009, Hindu

MANY FACES OF A MEDIEVAL KING

As the 800th dead anniversary of Qutubuddin Aibak approaches, one's thoughts turn to the establishment of Delhi Sultanate and this Tajdar-e-Hind who was the first crown-bearer of the Slave dynasty. Tajdar- e- Hind is an interesting subject of research which starts with Qutubuddin and ends with George VIth who ruled from England and not India. Before the first Tajdar installed himself there were five centuries which was the incubation period of

this institution that had Akbar as the most powerful monarch, Shah Jahan as the most magnificent, Aurangzeb as the craftiest and Mohammad Shah as the most colourful. The story begins in the early part of the eighth century and it's worthwhile to trace it initially up to AD 1210. it was in 1192 that Mohammad Ghori advanced to the plains of Hindustan but was defeated in the first Battle of Tarain by Prithviraj Chauhan. Mohammad Gauri came again in 1194 to defeat Jaichand, the Raja of Kannauj but after that his slave Qutubuddin Aibak continued to consolidate his master's conquests. In 1206 Ghauri was assassinated by member of fanatical Mulhaida sect and Qutubuddin became the ruler of Hindustan.

SOURCE

8th June 2009, Hindu

BUILDING GREEN DELHI

Green is in. No, we are not talking about the colour green. It's the design of some buildings in the city that are going 'green', a concept that focuses on increasing the efficiency of resource use while reducing building impact on the environment. Ahead of the Commonwealth Games 2010, the tribe of such buildings is growing rapidly in the Capital. The Indian Green Building Council, a Hyderabad based national body backed by the Confederation of Indian Industry, certifies green buildings according to the U.S. standards. These buildings in the city, many of them under construction at present, stand apart from other concrete structures because of their oddities that help in fighting the battle against global warming. The under construction building meant to be the head quarter of Development Alternatives, an NGO, coming up in South Delhi's Qutub Institutional Area is one such example.

SOURCE

5th June 2009, Hindustan Times

Should you have any comments or suggestions, you could reach us at

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