



INTACH

DELHI CHAPTER

Weekly News Clippings – 102

26<sup>th</sup> May – 1<sup>st</sup> June

## Editor's Note

*New building cloud over Purana Qila*

*Gole market shopkeepers resist restoration plan*

*Water body shown as dry land*

*Novel way to revive tube well*

*Gole market: Road to restoration will shut its shops*

*Squalls spare no one!*

### NEW BUILDING CLOUD OVER PURANA QILA

Can the government break its own law? It will, if the Ministry of Environment and Forest gets a go ahead to construct a museum near Purana Qila. The Ministry, which has been asked to vacate the current building housing the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) at FICCI premises on Barakhamba Road, is on the lookout for a new place. And it has set its eyes on the 7.86-acre plot used for parking near the ancient fort dating back to the 16th Century. “We have identified the plot of land belonging to the National Zoological Park besides the Purana Qila,” Advisor to the Ministry Dr G.V. Subrahmanyam told HT. “We have taken up the issue with Urban Development Ministry.” The India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO) uses the piece of land for parking. “(Hence) our priority is to first restore the land to the Ministry,” Subrahmanyam said. The law but then, will not a new structure within 100 metres of a monument protected by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) violate law? A 1992 notification prohibits any new construction within 100 metres around protected monuments while a further 200 metres is designated as regulated zone, where development is permitted only after the ASI’s approval. “We are aware of regulations and whenever the building is built, we will abide by all the rules and take all requisite permissions and approvals from ASI and even the Delhi Urban Arts Commission (DUAC),” Subrahmanyam said. But heritage lovers are aghast at the thought of a new concrete structure blocking the view of the Purana Qila façade. “How can they do it? Large portion of this parking land falls within the prohibited and regulated zones,” said convenor of Delhi chapter of Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural and Heritage (INTACH), A.G.K Menon. “There is no question of ASI giving any permission for this.” INTACH is a nationwide non-profit organization working for heritage conservation. “The DUAC will also have its apprehension in building a major structure obstructing the view of a heritage monument (from the Bhairon Marg side),” Menon added. Checkered history SITUATED ON Bhairon Marg, the land in question is ensconced between the National Zoological Park, the main railway line moving towards Nizamuddin Railway Station and the Bhairon temple sharing its boundary with the Purana Qila. As HT had reported earlier (February 10, 2009), the land is already a bone of contention between the ITPO and the Delhi Zoo with both claiming the other to be an encroacher.

#### SOURCE

27<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Hindustan Times

## **GOLE MARKET SHOPKEEPERS RESIST RESTORATION PLAN**

Plans to redevelop the 97-year-old Gole Market have hit a hurdle. On Wednesday, shopkeepers of the market downed shutters to protest against the redevelopment plan. The shopkeepers are angry at New Delhi Municipal Council's (NDMC) plan to relocate them on the pretext of redevelopment. Shopkeepers claimed that in 2006, NDMC's Deputy Chief Architect, in his response to a Right to Information query, had stated that they would not be displaced during the 54-week redevelopment project. "The civic body is now hell bent on evicting all shopkeepers. They are now non-committal about our dislocation being temporary or permanent," said Narayan Shamnani, president of Gole Market Merchants Association. However NDMC refuted the traders' claims. "Gole Market is a heritage building and we want to restore it, hence no commercial activity can be allowed. We might build a small museum there in future but giving the market back to the traders is out of the question," said a senior NDMC official.

### **SOURCE**

**28<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Hindustan Times**

## **WATER BODY SHOWN AS DRY LAND**

The degradation of a natural water reservoir at Maidangarhi has raised doubts over the government's intention of protecting such areas. The residents of the locality, experts and environmentalists have been demanding protection of the water body for a long time. They want it to be developed as a tourist spot. This water body has been shown as a dry land in the brochure of the Delhi government on climate change in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR), published by Rakesh Mehta, chief secretary to Delhi Government. Leading environment organizations, like Tapas and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, feel showing a big natural water body at Maidangarhi as a dry one could prove to be disastrous for the environment." It is true that water is depleting fast here. However, there has hardly been any effort on the part of the authorities to maintain the pond, which caters to animals of the adjoining villages as well as the forest area," said Dheer Singh, a resident of Maidangarhi. "Water in the pond used to be 20-ft deep in the past. Now it has come down to five-six feet. If something is not done soon, it will dry up," he added. Tapas, a non-government organization working on environmental issues, surveyed the area and the pond and found the water body spread over approximately 34, 650 sq m in the forest area, still has water at the centre and it still feeds nilgai, deer and other animals, besides birds. Nearby is vacant land belonging to the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), which lies neglected. "That is why we suggested to the government to develop this natural body as a tourist spot. One can see the Qutab Minar from here," said Vinod Jain, chairman, Tapas. However, such suggestions seem to have no bearing on the government. Why has the government shown it as a dry land is a question that has a broader perspective? "Land is an expensive commodity now. The government has always eyed it with great value, especially in times of growing urbanization. However, such an intention would have a disastrous impact on the ecology," said Manu Bhatnagar, chairman, INTACH. "On the contrary, these water bodies have become commodities of low priority for the government. The government has not taken action even in a single case to revive or develop water bodies on its own. It is the judiciary, which has intervened and has asked to revive water bodies," added Bhatnagar. In government offices, from Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to the office of Principal Secretary, Environment, Delhi Government, J. K. Dadoo, the authorities are passing the buck from one to the other. "I have seen that pond a few years ago when I was in the department of tourism, and there was water in it, of course. I have no idea what is the position now. The matter pertains to land owning agency, which maintains the water bodies," said Ram Negi, chief executive officer, DJB. No official from Dadoo's office was available for further comment.

### **SOURCE**

**28<sup>th</sup> May 2008, Hindustan Times**

### **NOVEL WAY TO REVIVE TUBE WELLS**

Every summer scores of tube wells are dug up in the Capital to draw out groundwater. Eventually all of these run dry as the water table recedes. So the people simply dig new ones and abandon the old ones. Such abandoned tube wells number around 9,000 in the city, with most of them in the parched South and South-West Delhi. Now an environment group has initiated a novel way to revive these dry and abandoned tube wells and in the process improve the underground water table and save money. FORCE, a group of Delhi citizens, has launched a campaign, Jal Sanchay Abhiyaan, which aims to replenish the groundwater reserves using only abandoned bore wells so as to create sustainability in supply of safe water for drinking and domestic needs. It is designed to give a boost to community level rainwater harvesting, with an aim to recharge abandoned tube wells. The idea is to use water harvesting in reviving the dry tube wells. "The old tube wells can still be used as aquifers to take rainwater to the underground water table. What we do is create rainwater harvesting channels in the area around the disused tube well and then put water into it. This water reaches the underground water table directly and soon replenishes the water table. In the process the old tube well becomes usable," says Jyoti Sharma, from the group. The cost of setting up a new tubewell is around Rs 70,000 but the cost of reviving an old one is just Rs 7,000. And in the process you harvest rainwater as well. "So this is like two at the price for one and that too at discounted price," adds Sharma. In consultation with the RWAs, sites have also been identified in Palam, Mahipalpur, Dwarka, GK I, GK II, Vasant Vihar, Shanti Niketan, Green Park, Defence Colony, East of Kailash, GK Enclave, C8 Vasant Kunj and several other areas. As of now work is on in 10 localities including Vasant Kunj (Pockets B5 & 6, C5 and B10), Naraina Vihar (G Block), CR Park (Pocket 52 and G Block) and Sheikh Sarai (Phase II) among others. "The residents' welfare associations that want to get the tube wells in their respective colonies revived can approach us and also get funds from 'My Delhi I Care' fund. The group has also managed to get a private company to contribute to the cost," adds Sharma.

#### **SOURCE**

**28<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Hindustan Times**

### **HC NOTICE TO GOVT, DTC ON PLANNED DEPOT**

Concerned about the fate of four water bodies facing extinction due to Delhi government's plan to construct a DTC depot at the spot, the Delhi High Court has stepped in. The water bodies are located in a 26-acre Gramsabha land in Bakkarwala village in Outer Delhi. Delhi government has transferred the entire patch of open land to DTC to construct a depot and maintenance yard. On Thursday, Justice Hima Kohli issued notices to the Delhi government and DTC after Bakkarwala Gramin Vikas Samiti filed a petition in court, challenging the government's move to convert the common land to a bus depot. Presenting the villagers' case, lawyer Namita Roy told the court that as per previous Supreme Court rulings, water bodies have to be protected and conversion of the open space to a DTC depot was illegal. She brought to the attention of the court that under Delhi Land Revenue Act, Gramsabha land has to be used for welfare and well being of villagers, which the city government had completely overlooked. She maintained that the government should have considered the future needs of the villages surrounding the open land. "If the basic infrastructure is inadequate, how could it transfer the land to DTC, which has been claiming to use the space available at 34 depots for shopping and budget hotels? This means they have excess capacity, but they are eyeing Gramsabha land. During consolidation of land in the region, this patch was declared as pasture land," Roy argued.

#### **SOURCE**

**29<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Times of India**

### **GOLE MARKET: ROAD TO RESTORATION WILL SHUT ITS SHOPS**

ONE creative solution to restore Gole Market to its full heritage status would be to keep out the bustling commercial activity that continues in this old colonial building. the New

The NDMC's much-delayed project will start soon, officials have said, and the first step would be to relocate 27 shops from the market's roundabout to other NDMC areas. NDMC's Director, Estate, R S Godbole said eviction notices have been issued to these shopkeepers and that the council has already taken possession of six shops. "The market is architecturally significant. It needs to be conserved and restored to its old glory," Godbole told Newline. He added that the roundabout is a busy intersection. "Our planners, as well as traffic controllers, have suggested there should be no commercial activity here." NDMC officials said the heritage building has continuously been subjected to overuse, and erratic use at that. One said: "The shops in the roundabout are very old. Some even go back to the 1930s, but shopkeepers have done little to maintain them. Partitions have been erected; stretches have been encroached upon. Some have even tampered with the original fabric of the building. The Bansal said: "We have been here for decades. Our fathers and grandfathers ran these shops. Now they want us to leave. What are we supposed to do?" Bansal's general merchandise shop was opened in 1937. He said: "My shop finds mention in various novels that talk about the city." Traders said the NDMC's offer was not feasible. P D Puggal, who runs a legal consultancy firm in the area, said: "We were offered onethird of the existing floor area and the rent for the new shops is much higher. We pay between Rs 500 and Rs 1,500 per month today, but will have to shell out Rs 15,000 to 20,000 in the new areas." The shopkeepers will now approach the Ministry of Urban Development to seek a stay order of some kind. In 2007, the NDMC had offered them vacant shops in Council areas based on a licence fee, fixed by the civic body. Twenty-seven vacant shops elsewhere had been offered through a draw of lots. Shopkeepers had rejected that offer. According to Estate department officials, an open bidding will now be held in June to allocate new areas if shopkeepers take the offer. They can run the existing trade in these new shops, except those who own restaurants, meat and fish shops. These trades are not allowed in Council markets. If any shop owner wants to change his trade, the NDMC will also consider that request, an official said.

#### **SOURCE**

**28<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Indian Express**

#### **SQUALLS SPARE NO ONE!**

Squalls do bring relief during the sweltering summer days but they also cause a lot of damage- uprooting trees, crushing cars, causing injuries and death and damaging buildings. Last week's freak storm sprang up on what had hitherto been a bright afternoon but it vent its fury on the Church of St. James in Kashmere Gate, dating back to 1836 and knocked down the cross and orb surmounting the elegant dome. According to press reports this was not the first time that the historic artifact was damaged. During the uprising of 1857, the cross and orb were shot down by the sepoys who had shaken off the foreign yoke and sworn loyalty to the last Moghul emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. Whatever it was the "Crown" of the church was damaged. Not only was that, the grave of controversial British Resident, William Fraser, in the church compound also vandalized. For the freedom fighters the church was a symbol of the Raj and an attack on it was considered an act of revenge against those who had usurped power from the ruling dynasty. Now back to the orb and cross the one that had been shot down in 1857 "was preserved in the church garden till it was stolen in the 1960s, ostensibly for its metal value. Some years later the peal of four in the belfry was stolen but recovered before it could be melted and sold as scrap, according to a report.

#### **SOURCE**

**1<sup>st</sup> June 2009, Hindu**

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

**INTACH Delhi Chapter**

**71, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi - 110003**

**Tel : 2463 2267, 2463 2269 Ext. 105**

**Email : [feedback@intachdelhichapter.org](mailto:feedback@intachdelhichapter.org)**