



INTACH

DELHI CHAPTER

Weekly News Clippings – 215
3rd January–9th January

Editor's Note

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BYE-LAWS FOR AREAS NEAR PROTECTED MONUMENTS PUT ON FAST TRACK

For those living near centrally protected monuments, here is some good news at the beginning of 2012. The authorities have finally taken steps to come up with 'model heritage byelaws' for two monuments in Delhi, which will pave way for other such structures, not just in Delhi but also across India. The heritage byelaws include matters relating to heritage controls such as elevations, facades, drainage systems, roads and service infrastructure (including electric poles, water and sewer pipelines) for areas around such monuments. Delhi has 174 Archeological Survey of India protected monuments, mostly situated in south Delhi areas such as Hauz Khas, Green Park, Nizamuddin, South Extension, Mehrauli and Malviya Nagar. Scores of citizens residing around the monuments are having a harrowing time as authorities have held up their applications for repairs/renovation (for properties falling within 0-100 metres of monuments) and new constructions (for those in 101-300 metres of monuments) citing absence of heritage byelaws. No new construction is allowed within 100 metres. Only with the heritage byelaws in place can the National Monument Authority (NMA) clear any proposals for properties within 0-300 metres. The ASI has finally roped in the Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), an NGO in the field of conservation, for preparing heritage byelaws. ASI's joint director general Dr BR Mani has been appointed as a competent authority under Section 20(e) of the Archeological Act, amended in March, 2010, and would be acting as a coordinator for getting heritage byelaws done. "We have identified Begumpuri Masjid and Khairul-Manzil for preparing model heritage byelaws on priority basis. A formal agreement between the ASI and INTACH will be signed soon," said an INTACH official. But even when the model heritage byelaws are prepared, the process would be fairly time consuming. INTACH will submit it to Delhi's competent authority, who will submit it to the NMA.

SOURCE

3rd January'2012, Hindustan Times

CRIMINAL NEGLECT

Three months after the Chandni Mahal building collapse that claimed seven lives, a trial court has asked Delhi Police and MCD to evolve a mechanism for ensuring safety of old buildings that face the risk of collapse due to unauthorized construction or demolition in it or in an adjacent building. Special CBI Judge A K Mendiratta also asked the MCD and Delhi Police commissioners to hold their officials accountable for any unauthorized

constructions or demolitions that take place in the areas under their jurisdiction “Irrespective of the investigation in the present case (of Chandni Mahal building collapse), it needs to be ensured by MCD and police that in cases of unauthorized demolition and construction of old structures, some preventive action is immediately taken to ensure the safety of adjacent buildings to avoid loss of precious lives,” the court said. To ensure safety of buildings adjacent to those under unauthorized construction, some modalities and guidelines need to be laid down and followed by the commissioner MCD in consultation with commissioner of Police, Delhi, to ensure timely action where unauthorized demolition and construction of buildings is carried,” the court said. The court’s order came while dismissing the bail plea of contractor Jalaluddin, arrested for his criminal culpability in the September 2011 collapse of an old building in the Chandni Mahal area due to ongoing work in the adjacent structure. The court also sought a probe into the role of local police and MCD officials in the Chandni Mahal building collapse. “The role of the local police, which remained silent till the entire building was demolished, also needs to be looked into to prevent similar incidents wherein precious lives were lost,” the court said. While rejecting Jalaluddin’s bail and his contention of getting parity with coaccused Anil who has already been granted bail, the court said, “The case of the applicant cannot be said to be analogous to Anil as the applicant was the contractor and the demolition of the adjacent structure had been carried out without ensuring the structural safety of the other parts of the building.

SOURCE

3rd January’2012, Deccan Herald

300-YR-OLD CHOKED BY CONCRETE

This almost 'three centuries old' banyan tree could have been a proud showcase for the national Capital’s natural heritage, similar to the 250-year-old Great Banyan Tree at Kolkata's Botanical Garden. However, thanks to apathy of the government agencies concerned and negligence by the local community, the banyan tree at the T-junction of Tughlaqabad village road and Mehrauli Badarpur road, stands in a pitiable condition today with a poor canopy and diseased trunk. Selling helmets besides this tree, Dharam Pal, a Tughlaqabad villager, recalled, "My grandfather used to tell me the canopy was twice bigger." The tree's girth is 28 feet 7 inches, an indication of the age of the tree. Road agency, the Public Works Department (PWD) has choked it with paved tiles leaving hardly any space for aeration of roots. The tiles were placed ahead of the Commonwealth Games in 2010. The tree hardly has any hanging aerial roots, characteristic of banyan trees. Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, a former MLA from Tughlaqabad, said, "We used to play on and around the hanging aerial roots of this tree. These vanished when the present road was widened. "I wrote to several agencies about its poor condition but no one paid any attention,” pointed out Shikharchand Jain, a property dealer. According to Subhash Chandra, former director (horticulture) of New Delhi Municipal Council, "The tree is deprived of nutrition support and nourishment from the soil due to paving. PWD's Sudhir Kumar agreed, "There are guidelines that needs to be followed about leaving breathing space for trees. We will look into the matter." He, however, blamed the forest department for the poor health of the tree. "Our concern permission for pruning or tree cutting, when sought. Health of the tree is entirely their (PWD's) responsibility," said DM Shukla, chief conservator of forests. Ajay Mahajan of NGO Kalpavriksha, suggested, "Tiles around the tree trunk need to be removed. Neem oil cakes and neem oil spray can be used to treat termites and other pests.

SOURCE

6th January’2012, Hindustan Times

KALAMKARI: WONDERS IN PEN & PAINT

The word kalamkari is a blend of two Persian words; kalam means pen and kari suggests craftsmanship. Another theory suggests that the words kalam and karyam are derived from Telugu language, which are then combined to form kalamkari. The common styles of kalamkari originated in the state of Andhra Pradesh and are named as 'Srikalahasti' and 'Machalipatnam'. Kalamkari is one of the time honoured crafts of the region. As the name implies, the art is about painting designs on cloth using a pen. Craftsmen follow indigenous methods to prepare dyes by making use of stuff easily available to them. Ingredients like water, paddy husk, fermented jaggery, vegetable and root extracts are widely used for preparing colours with varying hues. Before the fabric is ready for painting, it is passed through tedious procedures which may stretch to three weeks; first of all, it is bleached in a solution mixed with buffalo/sheep dung. Later, the fabric is washed and rinsed thoroughly in clean river water. When the bleaching process, which may take a couple of days, is done, the next step makes use of a special solution called myrobalam prepared with milk, resin and powder of gachakaya, a dry fruit. First, the fabric is carefully immersed in this solution and wrung before it is spread out in the sun. Once the fabric is crisp dried, it is ready for the final step of painting. Kalam, which gives the characteristic look to this art, comes in play at this stage, and patterns and designs are sketched painstakingly on the fabric. Kalamkari is done manually with a pen, traditionally made of bamboo. However, artisans often make use of blocks to paint designs. But they maintain the hallmark of the art by using pens to draw finer details. To achieve the desired effect, the fabric is painted in series, and each time it is painted, it is washed. On an average, each piece is washed around 20 times before the final piece is ready. Information gleaned from the pages of history reveals that the Golconda sultanate patronised this art in the middle ages. Mughals, impressed with the work of the artisans, christened them kalamkars, and kalamkari thus became their identity. Studies show that the art of kalamkari captured the interest of people even prior to 10th century. Alexander the Great too had kalamkari paintings in his collection. One may see it as a humble piece of art done with pen and paint, but it is amazing to note that it has gained much admiration across the world as it is displayed in the British Museum too. Indeed, to this day, the art continues to allure people with its distinct style and beauty.

SOURCE

8th January'2012, Deccan Herald

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