



INTACH

DELHI CHAPTER

Weekly News Clippings – 107

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Editor's Note

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DELHI'S NEW GATEWAYS

Once, the brick and mortar gates of Shahjahanabad-as the Walled City was called in the 17th century-gave Delhi its landmarks. By the time the Commonwealth Games kick off next year, the state government plans to give five new gates to Delhi that would not only serves as its entry points but also give it a distinct identity. Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit's pet project, which remained on the drawing board for two years, finally on track for implementation. The Unified Traffic & Transportation Infrastructure projects, gave its nod to the project at its last meeting on May 29. Delhi, which has historically been known for its gates, once had 52 gates. Most of them now no longer exist. The new project, to be funded by the Delhi government, will cost anywhere between Rs.60 crore and Rs. 70 crore. The gates would come up at the city's borders on five sides- Ghazipur, Shahdara, Tikri, Loni Road and Nandnagari. "They would be made of stainless steel and special steel wires would be used for suspended structures. These gates would also have special lights for illumination," said an official of the infrastructure centre. Delhi government wants the gates to be ready before the Commonwealth Games start in October 2010.

SOURCE

30th June 2009, *Hindustan Times*

ASI TO ALLOW MUSIC, DANCE SHOW AT SELECT MONUMENTS

This will be melody for the ears of music lovers. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is planning to throw open 10 select monuments in the Capital for cultural shows in the evenings, enthusiasts of music and dance to enjoy a performance with popular monuments in the backdrop. The ASI is looking at the move not only to generate additional revenue but also give music buffs a feel of the old-world charm. The genre of music or dance will be kept in sync with the history and ambience of a particular monument, ASI director-general K N Srivastava said. "For instance," Srivastava said, "we can have qawwali performances at Safdarjung Tomb, or maybe Sufi music shows at Red Fort — as it used to be in the Mughal era." The 10 monuments proposed for such cultural evenings are Purana Qila, Safdarjung Tomb, Qutab Minar complex, Red Fort, Tughlaqabad Fort, Sher Shah Gate (opposite Purana Qila), the children's heritage museum at Siri Fort, Bara Bateshewala complex, Shalimar Bagh, and Qila Rai Pithora conservation centre complex.

The proposal seeks to keep the monuments open till 9 pm for such shows, Srivastava said. ASI officials said details are yet to be finalised on the criteria for granting permission to organizers of such shows, as also ways to reach out to them with proposals for organizing performances. Srivastava said the Old Fort already hosts cultural programmes and several concert organizers get in touch with the ASI for permission. "The cultural programmes at the 10 selected monuments will be a regular feature," he said. "This will generate additional revenue for the monument and help in maintenance by keeping certain public spaces in the premises in regular use."

SOURCE

5th July 2009, Indian Express

7 FORESTS INCLUDING SULTANPUR DECLARED ECO-SENSITIVE ZONES

What comes as welcome news for Sultanpur National Park in Gurgaon, Bhindawas wildlife sanctuary in Jhajjar as well as another national park and seven other sanctuaries, the Central government has issued a draft notification declaring areas around these sites as eco-sensitive zones (ESZs). This would mean all development activity within 5-km radius of these spots will be restricted. The state forest department had taken up the issue with the Centre after reports of realtors building close to the sites came in. Forest minister Kiran Choudhry claimed the notification would restrict the "destruction" of natural wealth in the garb of "development". "We took up the case silently with the Prime Minister and UPA chairperson being aware of the vested interest of different groups. Construction had started close to Sultanpur bird sanctuary. With the land prices sky-rocketing in Gurgaon, Jhajjar and Rohtak districts, these sites were facing threat of degradation," Choudhry told Times City. Sultanpur and Bhindawas are close to the capital and both attract thousands of migratory birds belonging to over 250 species during winter. The draft notification, to which anyone can object within 60 days, is likely to affect two special economic zones being developed in Gurgaon and Jhajjar districts. The government claimed that it would also go a long way in checking illegal mining in the Aravali and Shivalik ranges in the state. "The Supreme Court has already declared Aravali as a protected forest and recently mining has been banned. We are trying to ensure no further degradation of Aravalis, which is crucial to our survival and maintaining ecological balance in the region," the minister said. She added that with the notification of ESZs, the state government now has an additional tool to improve the buffers and green corridors around the protected forests. Once the Centre comes out with the gazette notification, no highly polluting industries can be set up within 5km of the boundaries of these protected areas. The other restrictions in the ESZs include no permission to setting up polluting industries within 3 kilometres, no crushing activity or wood-based industry within a 2km radius. Moreover, no mining activity would also be allowed within 500 metres and no construction of more than two storeyed (25 ft) buildings would be allowed within 300 metres. Moreover, no activity other than cultivation and the sinking of tube wells within 100 metres of the protected areas would be allowed. The national park covered by the notification other than Sultanpur is Kalesar and sanctuaries covered by it are Kalesar, Khol Hai Raitan, Bir Shikargah, Nahar, Chhilchhila, Abushehar and Khaparwas besides Bhindawas.

SOURCE

6th July 2009, Times of India

AN ODE TO ITS DEAD CHARM

Delhi Municipal Corporation's plan to give a new look to Chandni Chowk is a laudable venture. Implementation should start this September, after public views are taken into consideration. Traders, general merchants and residents of the Walled City have all been invited to send their suggestions on how the moonlight street should look like after the redevelopment of what has over the centuries become a rabbit's warren. The redevelopment plan, say reports, proposes ample walking space for the pedestrians with six metre wide footpaths. There will be one way traffic and multi-level parking for vehicles in Parade

If that comes about then one wonders if the annual Ramlila will continue to be held there. Perhaps there won't be much space for it if cars and other transport take up the whole ground, where once parades were held as there was no Delhi beyond the city walls. Before that, this place was occupied by the houses of Moghul noblemen attached to the Red Fort. Their havelis were demolished after the mutiny of 1857 and the resultant space used by the British to exercise their troops. Besides the pedestrian walks and one-way traffic, trams would be reintroduced but they too will have the modern look. Replanting of trees would also be a part of plan. The artist's impression of how Chandni Chowk will look like after the scheme is implemented gives the impression that this street will look like the Moghul promenade it once was, when a canal flowed in the centre, with gravel roads on either side and huge peepul, neem and tamarid trees providing the much-needed shade. The canal, which was part of Nehar Sadaat Khan, one stream of which flowed into the Red Fort and the other passed through Daryaganj before joining the Yamuna, was closed after the Mutiny as it has begun to stink-because of the stagnant water and also because the corpses of those killed as rebels and traitors by the East India Company's troops were left rotting in it.

SOURCE

6th July 2009, Hindu

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