



**INTACH**

**DELHI CHAPTER**

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## Editor's Note

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### **14 MONUMENTS GET A NEW LEASE OF LIFE**

After a prolonged delay, Delhi government's plan to bring many unprotected city heritage structures under state protection has taken off. The first list of 14 monuments has been notified while another 13 monuments are awaiting approval. With the 2010 Games just a year away, the state government had recently joined hands with the Intach Delhi Chapter for protection and conservation of 92 unprotected monuments in the city. These structures have been identified from the list of 250 monuments prepared by the Delhi department of archaeology to be provided state protection under The Delhi Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 2004. According to a senior official, the 92 monuments shortlisted fall in the route of 2010 Games. The government already had six monuments under its protection. Said a senior official of the state department: "Six monuments are already protected and 14 have got preliminary notification. We have sent a list of another 13 monuments to the L-G and are awaiting approval. Many of the monuments have been encroached upon and we have given the occupants two months' time to file any objection on account of ownership. According to our investigations, everything has been authenticated by the revenue department and these monuments will come under the government purview very soon. Once the two month period is over, a final notification will be issued." The project is expected to cost up to Rs 90 lakh and once the first installment of funds is released, Intach will start engaging conservation architects and experts for it. Officials said that at least four of the notified monuments had been encroached upon and the first step was to remove encroachments and provide security guards at the sites. According to senior officials, this is the first time in 15 years when monuments will get state level protection on the lines of ASI-protected buildings. According to senior officials from the state department of archaeology, they would be notifying all 92 monuments as per an MoU with Intach Delhi Chapter by the Commonwealth Games. "These monuments have been selected on the basis of their size, significance and the Commonwealth Games route. With the first 14 almost notified, we are working on notifying more monuments from the list," said a senior official. There are 1,400 historical buildings in Delhi. Conservationists claim it is essential to protect as many of them to salvage the structures from encroachment. Under the plans laid out by the state government, each of these buildings will soon have an official board declaring its protected status in front of them as is the case with centrally-protected building. "Whether a

structure is under central or state level protection, it would get the same level of legal cover,” said an expert.

#### **SOURCE**

**16<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Times of India**

#### **HC ALLOWS BIODIVERSITY PARK WITH NATIVE TREES**

The plan of Ministry of Urban Development (MUD) to get exotic plants for Vasant Kunj Biodiversity Park has fallen flat with the Delhi High Court on Wednesday asking the Centre to stick to planting native tree species of the Aravali hills. The HC had earlier put a stay on construction on the Biodiversity Park in Vasant Kunj based on a PIL stating that the area was part of the ridge and was to be preserved in its pristine glory. It has now asked the Centre not to grow exotic plants but to follow native tree species that have been suggested by horticulturist. Stating that it was fine to maintain the Biodiversity Park as it would bring people in and will not be encroached by others, a division bench comprising Chief Justice of Delhi HC A P Shah and Justice Manmohan accepted the recommendation of the horticulturists. Petitioner Vinod Jain’s counsel had submitted that the area on which construction was going on is situated on the ridge that was part of the Aravalis. Seeking the court’s direction to the government for growing native tree species of the Aravalis to maintain the ridge like environment, the lawyer said MUD was planning to purchase exotic plants from outside the country. The court asked the government to comply with the report of horticulturist professor Babu, who recommended a list of native plant/tree species for the park. The petition had sought court’s direction to restraint the organizers from constructing the park. The petitioner had said that construction of this park would cause environmental hazards as it would clear the ridge. Submitting photographs of the ongoing construction, the petitioner said this would destroy flora and fauna.

#### **SOURCE**

**16<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Times of India**

#### **ARTS BODY TO MAP CITY’S GROWTH THROUGH 2010 EXHIBITION**

COME 2010 Commonwealth Games, and the Delhi Urban Arts Commission will transform some of the most frequented and accessible public places in the Capital into cartographic museums. The urban body plans to organize an exhibition that will recount the history of the city and its people through maps and drawings spanning over a thousand years. C In the pipeline is plans to track relevant maps and documents which the commission will exhibit to showcase how the city structure has grown and the factors behind the growth. According to DUAC chairperson Professor K T Ravindran, the exhibition will be categorized into different themes, each broadly covering a different period in the city’s history. Beginning from the late Harappan settlements, these documents will trace the city’s historical development up to the present date and on to Master plan 2021. While the emphasis of the exhibition will be on the collection of great cartographic images and panoramas of Delhi through the ages as well as the ways in which the concerns of its people have been reflected in the maps, DUAC will also dig out original manuscripts and evidence to substantiate various historic events. The purpose of the exhibition, says Professor Ravindran, is not just to show when and how the city has grown, but rather to offer the many stories and events that has shaped the city. The maps will throw light on the shifting of capitals, setting up of the Old City, changes initiated by the British, Lutyens’ Delhi. Also to be included are more recent events like the Emergency, the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and many more that shaped the cultural and political landscape of the city? Delhi is uniquely suited to a cartographical biography due to its dynamic growth. “This city has a lot of history that people are unaware of. What is noteworthy is how the current entry and exit points of the city are linked to that of the past,” says Professor Ravindran. “For instance, not many would know that the current NH-8 was an erstwhile Harappan Age road.” A think tank and advisory group comprising artists, historians and architects is being set up to monitor and plan the details of the project.

DUAC has also invited artists and historians with requisite experience to work as consultants. Besides, the urban body is also in the process of roping in individual's public libraries and civic agencies like the Central Public Works Department, the Delhi Development Authority and the New Delhi Municipal Council to help them trace archived documents and maps. The exhibition is scheduled for September 2010 and will be spread over a few weeks across multiple venues in the city. DUAC also plan to bring out a document on the same exhibition, the details of which are currently being worked out

**SOURCE**

**16<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Indian Express**

#### **GRANITE OR SANDSTONE? DEBATE OVER ROCK WEIGHS DOWN CP RESTORATION**

The NDMC and the DUAC are fighting hard now-with rocks. Don't be alarmed: senior officials are not exactly hurling stones at each other. But granite, sandstone and Kota figure predominantly in their tussle over the restoration of Connaught Place. The stone of contention is the flooring material for the CP restoration project. While the DUAC has suggested the use of sandstone, the civic body was in favour of using granite. NDMC's decision to comply with the DUAC's request spells trouble for the look of the market, which after its makeover, was supposed to be uniform throughout. This is because C-block has already been paved with granite. Presently, except for pilot project C block, the flooring of the rest of CP is Kota stone. According to NDMC, the arts council had rejected their earlier plan for using granite as the flooring material, which the civic body claims is more durable and stronger. The DUAC has contended that CP, being a heritage restoration project should use the original material for construction which is sandstone. According to NDMC, maintenance of sandstone will be much more difficult compared to granite.

**SOURCE**

**17<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Hindustan Times**

#### **INTACH MEET ON HERITAGE TREES IN CITY**

INTACH on Friday organized a half day consultation of experts on the need to give special attention to the tree wealth of the city, with special reference to heritage trees. The main issues taken up were criteria for heritage trees, methodology for listing and modalities of implementation. Mr. Daniel Bar-Ness, a Fulbright Scholar, made a presentation. He has been working on "Landmark Trees of India" and has identified some trees in this category in Delhi as well.

**SOURCE**

**18<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Asian Age**

#### **FOCUS ON TREE WEALTH**

A half- day discussion on the need to pay special attention to Delhi's tree wealth was organized by the INTACH here on Friday. On the agenda were criteria for heritage trees, methodology for listing and documentation and modalities of implementation. Fulbright Scholar Daniel Bar-Ness made a presentation.

**SOURCE**

**18<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Hindu**

#### **INTACH MEET DISCUSSES PROTECTION OF 'HERITAGE TREES'**

INTACH organized a half-day consultation of experts and other knowledgeable persons on Friday over the need to give special attention to the wealth of the city, with special reference to Heritage Trees. The main issues taken into consideration were criteria for heritage trees,

## **SOURCE**

**18<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Pioneer**

### **DELHI PUSHES FOR HERITAGE STATUS**

As one travels around the city, the eye is often caught by the mix of the modern world and the old world. Amid snazzy malls, maddening traffic, apartment buildings and bustling bazaars, Delhi is home to old and beautiful structures that are testimonies of history. But in spite of hundreds of historical sites, Delhi is yet to attain the heritage city status. In an effort to enlist Delhi among Unesco World Heritage cities, the INTACH has proposed an exclusive heritage route connecting scores of historical monuments in the capital. Delhi has more than 1,200 major and minor historical monuments including three Unesco World Heritage monuments. The heritage route will be spread across a 50 km stretch from the Coronation Park, Red Fort, Chandni Chowk, Nizamuddin, Daryaganj, Feroz Shah Kotla, Lutyen's Delhi, Presidential Palace, Mehrauli, Sultangarhi and Tughlakabad fort. In the first phase, two World Heritage monuments Red Fort complex and Humayun's tomb will be connected through the heritage route.

## **SOURCE**

**19<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Asian Age**

### **HISTORY GETS A FACELIFT**

Conservation work on monuments in Lodhi Gardens has finally gained momentum. In an MoU signed between Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and INTACH Delhi Chapter, the latter has been awarded the project to restore five monuments in phases. In the first phase, Bara Gumbad, Shish Gumbad and Mohammed Shah's Tomb are being restored and the remaining structures will follow later. Senior officials say they aim to complete the project within a year. Said an official from INTACH Delhi Chapter: "We are working on one monument at a time and the work has started from Mohammed Shah's tomb. Repair work has started from the dome and re-plastering is happening where required. The floral pattern from the top of structure is being recreated and we are working towards repairing plaster on the ground to avoid water accumulation. This particular tomb will take about three months and then we will proceed to other monuments." This is the first time ASI and INTACH are collaborating together to conserve protected sites. In the past, INTACH has been more involved in conservation of unprotected sites like Mehrauli Archaeological Park and other historical buildings that do not fall under ASI's purview. ASI, which is facing huge problems in conserving 174 protected structures in the city due to shortage of manpower and limited resources, had asked INTACH to prepare a report of the five tombs in Lodhi Gardens to assess their present condition and see what kind of work is required. The funding for the project — Rs 1 crore — will be borne by Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL). INTACH convener A G K Menon said: "Initially, we will work on conservation of three monuments. There are a total of five monuments which will get a facelift, according to the MoU. The other two will be looked into later." ASI will supervise the entire project but the implementation will be done by INTACH. ASI officials said that the project was awarded to INTACH after looking at their past record. In 2007, ASI had signed an MoU with SAIL to protect Lodhi Gardens' monuments but no structural work on the tombs could take place as a conservation report for the sites had to be prepared. The gardens have 10 ASI protected structures including five tombs, which are a crucial part of Delhi's history and date back to as early as the 15th century. The monuments around which the gardens are laid out are Mohammed Shah's Tomb, Sikander Lodhi's Tomb, Sheesh Gumbad and Bara Gumbad. The tomb of Mohammed Shah, the last of the Sayyid rulers, is the earliest of these and was built in 1444 by Ala-ud-din Alam Shah. The gardens also house one of the rare structures built in Delhi during the reign of Mughal king Akbar — a bridge containing seven arches, the central one being the largest. Almost all the monuments are in a bad shape today. The plaster is peeling off the walls and the structures are broken/decoulored at many places.

**SOURCE**

**20<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Times of India**

**SQUATTERS THREATEN DELHI'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE**

NEW DELHI // When Mehmood Nizami moved to Delhi from Hyderabad 70 years ago, like most migrants, his first priority was to find a place to live. Young and penniless, he struggled to find affordable accommodation near the shrine of the Sufi saint Nizamuddin in South Delhi where he had landed a job as a devotional singer. So the budding Qawwali musician decided to set up home in the only spare place that he could find – inside the sturdy walls of an abandoned 400-year old Mughal tomb. Nizami and most of his 13 children have since died, but his descendents still live in the vaults of the ornate 16th century monument which houses the remains of Atgah Khan – a chancellor at the court of Akbar the Great. Today, their home bears little resemblance to the dark crypt their grandfather first occupied. Over the years they have adapted the space to suit their needs, obtaining electricity and water connections, knocking holes in the wall for air-conditioning units, and painting it white to brighten the windowless space. They have even installed a small modern kitchen in the arched recesses that line the vaults' wall and fitted other alcoves with doors to make cupboards.

**SOURCE**

**The National**

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

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