



**INTACH**

**DELHI CHAPTER**

**Weekly News Clippings – 110**

**21<sup>st</sup> July-27<sup>th</sup> July**

## Editor's Note

*Jama Masjid plan gets nod*

*Nature trail at CM's house will soon be Biodiversity Park*

*One ticket for all heritage sites planned*

*Green light to restore Delhi Ridge*

*Prayers in protected monuments put ASI in a spot*

*'Offering prayers at monuments a violation'*

*Protected monuments breached for prayers*

*Common ticket for monuments*

*Delhi set to flaunt seven cities during Games*

### **JAMA MASJID PLAN GETS NOD**

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) can now breathe easy. After four failed attempts, the civic agency finally managed to get the nod from Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC) for their controversial Jama Masjid redevelopment plan. Much of their original plan which boasted of underground parkings and a heritage mall has been done away with as both DUAC and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) insisted on minimum intervention in the sensitive zone to preserve its historical glory. MCD is yet to get a feasibility study done by IITD in the Jama Masjid area according to Delhi High Court orders. "At present, only the master plan for Jama Masjid redevelopment has been approved by DUAC. Individual projects pertaining to Meena Bazar, landscaping of the area, etc, will have to be sent to DUAC for approval again. To begin work tenders can only be floated after we receive the DUAC minutes formally," said a senior MCD official. DUAC chairman K T Ravindran said they have given MCD overall approval for the layout plan as the civic agency had finally come around to adopt the 'minimum intervention' idea. "The agency has agreed to do away with underground parkings. We have approved the plan on the condition that they come back to us to get separate clearances for each component of the plan," said Ravindran. ASI has also laid down three conditions while giving MCD the go-ahead. "We have stipulated that no parking should be made in the area, there should be more facilities for the common man and lastly, the overall development work in Jama Masjid should coincide with our conservation plans for Red Fort," said a senior ASI official. According to DUAC's directions, the market/shops around Dargah Sheikh Kalimullah should be singlestorey structures built at the level of the ground around Meena Bazar to avoid any obstruction of the visual field between Red Fort and Jama Masjid precinct. "The proposal discussed needs to be vetted by ASI by taking cognizance of the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) of the world heritage site of Red Fort and Sunheri Masjid," said an official. DUAC has recommended that the dome-like structure proposed at Meena Bazar should be removed and the service utility duct proposed across the Jama Masjid precinct be shifted to Subhas Marg. "Fire station and related facilities must be the part of the proposal," said an official. The entrance to the bus bay should be minimum 75m from the intersection of two roads," added DUAC officials.

Earlier, both DUAC and ASI had expressed reservations about the project and warned MCD that Jama Masjid area now comes under the buffer zone of the world heritage site — Red Fort — and therefore, no major changes can take place to disturb the area's historical significance.

**SOURCE****21<sup>st</sup> July 2009, Times of India****NATURE TRAIL AT CM'S HOUSE WILL SOON BE BIODIVERSITY PARK**

Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit on Tuesday said the natural trail at her official residence here would be developed as a biodiversity park. Dikshit said this after launching a plantation drive at her 3, Motilal Nehru Place residence where school children planted different species of saplings. The environment & Forest Department of Delhi Government has decided to plant at least 12 lakh saplings this year. Apart from this, more than six lakh saplings would be distributed free of cost from DMS booths, Kendriya Bhandars and petrol pumps in the Capital. Speaking on the occasion, Dikshit exhorted children to support efforts to expand the green area in Delhi which is considered as greenest Capital in the world. With plantation of large number of herbal and medicinal plant and extended greenery, it would turn out to be a most exciting place to visit within the city in Lutyen's Zone area. Present Nature Trail at CM's residence remains open for school children on every Tuesday and Friday. A number of school children from different schools have been visiting this place to have a pleasure date with the nature.

**SOURCE****22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009****YAMUNA REMAINS DIRTY, FUNDS UNUTILISED**

WHILE Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit claims that Yamuna cannot be cleaned before the Commonwealth Games, it has emerged that the funds for the Yamuna Action Plan -- Rs 624 crore for three states and Rs 327 crore for Delhi, over a period of 5 years -- are still underutilized. Responding to a Parliament question on Wednesday, the Minister of Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh admitted the Yamuna remains dirty. "Water quality of Yamuna between Tajewala and Palla in Haryana is acceptable. But the stretch in the vicinity of Delhi -downstream of Wazirabad and upstream of Okhla, and some stretches of Uttar Pradesh, exceeds the standards in terms of bio-chemical oxygen demand of three mg/l," said Ramesh. While progress on YAP Phase-II is crawling, Delhi Jal Board says they will catch up by 2010. "All the works, including sewer rehabilitation, are in full progress. We should be able to make up for the lost time. We should be able to finish YAP-II by February next year," DJB CEO Ramesh Nigam told Newslite. This will mean Delhi utilizing hundreds of crores over this year. In February this year, the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests also pulled up the Delhi government for not utilising YAP-II money. "We express serious concern over the tardy progress of the project and the low utilisation of funds," the report said. "Though there is no dearth of funds, no satisfactory results have been achieved," it said.

**SOURCE****23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009, Indian Express****ONE TICKET FOR ALL HERITAGE SITES PLANNED**

Have you been postponing a visit to the Red Fort or the Qutub Minar or the Humayun's Tomb fear of the long queues? Well, very soon, you would be able to take your entire family, not to forget the bunch of visiting relatives, to these three world heritage sites in the Capital with out much hassle. The government is planning to introduce a common ticket for all world heritage sites. The arrangement would be introduced in three months, the government said on Wednesday. The ticket would be common for all world heritage sites across the country, except the Taj Mahal. The government has also decided to issue an exclusive and new entry ticket for the Taj Mahal at Agra and another ticket for the remaining monuments in the country.

**SOURCE**

## GREEN LIGHT TO RESTORE DELHI RIDGE

MOST people would use either a shop, a billboard or road signages as landmarks. For Yoav Daniel Bar-Ness, though, nothing comes as close to being a landmark as trees. In India on a Fulbright scholarship, Bar-Ness has spent the last one year touring the country to identify trees that stand out and can perhaps be considered landmarks. He was recently invited by the natural heritage division of INTACH to make a presentation on trees he has identified in Delhi. INTACH is working on a project to identify Delhi trees that can be classified as heritage trees to conserve them. Bar-Ness looks around for interesting trees -- either because they are historically important, of religious significance, or are just plain interesting to look at and have a story to tell. "Nowadays even people in cities who don't know much about forests know things like the neem tree is good for medicinal purposes; they know you can eat jamun; everybody knows mango trees," he says. "But there are few people sticking up for the botanical origins, in the sense using them for science education. "I am trying to step away from the utility aspect of these trees and use individual trees as ambassadors for different subjects of science." One such tree that Bar-Ness has identified is an old peepal tree at the junction where the CP Inner Circle meets Barakhamba Road. He calls it the 4.30 tree, with good reason too: "If Connaught Place is one big clock dial then this tree comes in at 4.30. If you look at the aerial photographs of the tree, it is obvious that they very carefully dug up the Barakhamba Metro line to ensure that the tree survives."The 4.30 tree is the largest tree left standing in CP. "Thousands pass by the tree every day. May be they can take a moment to think about the tree cover that used to be in CP and assess whether it was a good decision to cut down those trees to build the Metro." Another tree that has made it to Bar-Ness's landmark list is a 600year-old khirni tree in the dargah at Chirag Delhi. "That tree was apparently planted by Nizamuddin, who died in 1356. That's a landmark in the sense it's been around long before Delhi was recognizable. "So, it's a historical landmark." Bar-Ness also believes Delhi is more aware of its green cover than other metro cities in the country. FOR the first time, Delhi's Ridge, which lies on the oldest mountain range in the world, is set to get a booster shot. The Delhi Ridge, on the Aravalli mountain range, is currently what many ecologists call a 'green desert' -- because the forest tracts over South, Central and Northern Delhi are infested with weeds. Now the Forest department, in consultation with the Centre for Environmental Management of Degraded Ecosystems (CEMDE), has started work on an action plan to turn the Ridge into an ecological forest -- with grassland, dry deciduous and mixed deciduous forest communities and its own water check dams. This was done after the action plan found that large parts of the Ridge are just open scrub land with a low density of trees. On Saturday and Sunday, the DDA and the Forest department planted 5,000 ecologically relevant tree species at Kamala Nehru Ridge opposite St Stephen's College. The varieties included fruit species for the large resident monkey population in the forest -- jamun, imli, amla, bel, sheesham and fig-bearing peepal trees. Currently, the action plan, created after a survey of parts of the Ridge by the forest department and the CEMDE, notes that large parts of the Ridge is not thick forest, and is weed infested. Observations on the Central Ridge, opposite Maurya Sheraton, include: "The vegetation is mostly thorny scrub, and 80 per cent of the ground is open, except for scattered clumps of lantana (a weed) and other bushes. Prosopis Juliflora (another weed) is dominant but the density is extremely low, about 10 to 15 trees per hectare." "We're starting work on the action plan this year. Though one plantation drive has already been done, others will be done with more monsoon rain. The focus will be on the central Ridge," Conservator of Forests D M Shukla told Newslite. The restoration of the central Ridgewillstartwitha400-hectare area located between Vande Mataram Marg in the West, Mother Teresa Crescent Marg in the East, and Dhaula Kuan in the South. The target this year is 100 hectares adjacent to the Simon Bolivar Marg. Interestingly, to provide irrigation to freshly-sown saplings, the Forest department will take recycled wastewater from Maurya Sheraton and the Taj Hotel son SP Marg.

### SOURCE

25<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Indian Express

## **PRAYERS IN PROTECTED MONUMENTS PUT ASI IN A SPOT**

THE Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) found itself in a tight spot today when nearly 200 people forcibly entered several protected heritage structures like the Qutab Minar, Jamali Kamali complex, Mandi Mosque and Rajaon ki Baoli to offer Friday prayers. The ASI had been facing similar problems with a section of Mehrauli area's resident Muslim population, who had on earlier occasions forcibly entered the Jamali Kamali mosque to offer Friday prayers. Senior officials of the heritage protection body said the police have ignored their earlier requests to register FIRs or provide protection during such incidents. "On Friday as well, when people forced their way into the Qutab Minar, which is a protected monument with ticketed entry, police officials chose to look the other way, despite requests from ASI officials to stop illegal entry into the complex," a senior ASI official said. "Instead, the Station House Officer at the nearby police station asked the ASI officials to allow entry to these people." At the Mohammadi Mosque in Hauz Khas area, police officials managed to keep the crowd out, who then offered their prayers on the road right outside the mosque. "According to the law, only those monuments that allowed prayers to be held in the complex before being taken over by the ASI, are entitled to be open for regular prayers. No provision can be made to re-introduce or open a monument complex for prayers for any religious community," K K Mohammad, superintending archaeologist, Delhi Circle, ASI, said.

### **SOURCE**

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

## **'OFFERING PRAYERS AT MONUMENTS A VIOLATION'**

ASI is carrying foul over the blatant violation by a particular community of the orders of High Court over use of protected sites for offering prayers under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1985 and rules 1959. The conservation of total seven protected monuments in Delhi is under threat for the past several months and some for few years. In fact, inside the four monuments, Jamali Kamali, Rajaon Ki Baoli, Mandi Masjid, all at Mehrauli Archaeological Park and Mohammadi Mosque at Hauz Khas, people of the community have started adamantly offering prayers. It is clear violation of the High Court order dated 27 January 1999 and provision of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1985 and rules 1959, but it has put the conservation of these monuments in danger. Talking to The Statesman, the Superintendent, ASI Mr. K K Muhammed said, "As per rule, religious prayers are allowed only in those monuments where prayers have been offering traditionally. And when monuments were taken over by ASI if there were no provision of offering the prayers, no one can start the prayers. The beginning of prayers is gross violation of High Court order and rules of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1985 and rules 1959." "in fact, offering prayers inside the protected monuments leads to some other cultural activities which later cause harm to the monuments and this initiative will pave the path where religious prayers are still not being offered like inside Ajanta Allora, Mahaballipuram and churches of Goa," Mr. Muhammed further added.

### **SOURCE**

**25<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Statesman**

## **PROTECTED MONUMENTS BREACHED FOR PRAYERS**

A group of about 200 people on Friday forced their way into three ASI protected monuments in the capital and held prayers at the mosques inside the heritage structures. The group forcibly entered Qutub Minar, Jamali Kamali and Raja ki Baoli monuments in Mehrauli in South Delhi and held Friday prayers inside the mosques, ASI Delhi Circle chief K K Mohammad said. According to Mohammad, the three places are centrally protected monuments and ASI rules prohibit prayers being offered at such places. A similar incident was reported last Friday too when around 150-170 people entered and offered namaz by force at Mohammadi

Spokesperson Rajan Bhagat said the police will register an FIR against the people whoever violated the law. Bhagat also said the police will take strict action so that such incidents cannot occur again. However, no FIR was registered till late evening.

**SOURCE**

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

#### **COMMON TICKET FOR MONUMENTS**

Plans are on the anvil to introduce a common entry ticket for all World Heritage Sites except the Taj Mahal in the next three months. Similarly, a common entry ticket will be introduced for all other ticketed monuments under the ASI. A long-pending demand of tour operators and travel agents, the move is meant to cut queues and thereby make these sites more tourists friendly. While the Ministry of Tourism has designed the new ticket, an exclusive ticket has also been drawn up for the Taj Mahal. These tickets can be bought in bulk and will be available at the headquarters of the ASI here and at its booking counters at the monuments.

**SOURCE**

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

#### **DELHI SET TO FLAUNT SEVEN CITIES DURING GAMES**

By the time the Commonwealth Games being, alongwith its modernity, Delhi will be ready to flaunt its historical past as well. To present its glorious past, the ASI has decided to excavate, repair and present Delhi's 'Seven Cities'. As a first step, excavation and conservation work has already begun at the first four- Qila Rai Pithora, Siri, Tughlaqabad and Adilabad- on a large scale. Qila Rai Pithora, initially called Lal Kot and built by the Tomars, considered the first city of Delhi, Qila Rai Pithora currently lies in ruins, but the ASI hopes to carry out extensive fortification on the ruins of the fort ramparts and unearth some of the buried fort walls. It has also been marked out for scientific clearing and conservation. Scientific clearing, which is a form of partial excavation, is also being carried out in Siri, widely considered the second city of Delhi. Tughlaqabad and adjoining Adilabad, too, are being given a massive facelift. "there is a lot of work at hand with the largesale conservation work at these four cities but once these are done, we will move on to the cities of Firozabad, Shergarh and Shahjahanabad," a senior ASI official said.

**SOURCE**

**27<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

**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)**