



INTACH

DELHI CHAPTER

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CHANDNI CHOWK REDEVELOPMENT PLAN GETS CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL

The MCD's ambitious plan for redevelopment of Chandni Chowk, including a proposal for revival of tram service and restricted vehicular movement, might soon become a reality with the Delhi Urban Arts Commission granting preliminary conceptual approval to it this past week. The DUAC has recommended introduction of lowfloor open tram transportation system with controlled movement and accessibility from both sides while suggesting that "the life and texture of the old city should be reflected on the streets." The proposal is part of the Rs.15 crore redevelopment plan to decongest the road from Red Fort to Fatehpuri Masjid in Old Delhi and give it an attractive look. According to the plan submitted by the civic body, four metre-gauge trams, each having a capacity to carry 20 people, will run on the southern carriageway of Chandni Chowk from Red Fort to Fatehpuri Masjid. There will be two tracks—one from Red Fort to Fatehpuri to Red Fort. Meanwhile, the northern carriageway of the Chandni Chowk stretch will be used for vehicular traffic from H.C Sen Marg or from the Fatehpuri Masjid side. Traffic will not be allowed to enter from the Red Fort side. At present, CNG run mini buses are plying in the area after a ban on cycle-rickshaws by the Delhi High Court and the development plan aim to further de-congest traffic and revive the heritage glory of the old city.

SOURCE

27th October 2009, Hindu

NDMC STEPS IN TO SAVE HERITAGE TOMB

A day after HT drew attention to the threat posed to an unnamed tomb on Sher Shah Suri Marg by an upcoming underground parking across Delhi High Court, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) issued an urgent 'stop work' notice. The council's chief architect has issued a stop work notice to Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC). Chennai-based Consolidated Construction Consortium (CCCL) and Samjung Tech Consortium (design and build) are carrying out the construction work with DMRC being the consultants for the six-level underground parking. "We issued a stop work notice to DMRC," confirmed NDMC spokesperson Anand Tiwari. The unnamed tomb of the Sher Shah Suri-era (15th century) figures in the list of 141 heritage structures in NDMC area notified by Delhi government. It means, no alterations or demolition can be made to any of the structures in the list without referring the proposal to the Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC). NDMC officials said "We will refer the case to the DUAC and the HCC once the DMRC completes the documentation." DMRC spokesperson Anuj Dayal agreed they had received the stop work notice but said only preparatory work was being carried out at the site. "...full fledged work will start only when we have all requisite permissions."

"As far as the safety of the monument is concerned, plans are afoot to ensure the monument remains safe. We will take all adequate safety measures for its protection," he said. Dayal said they had written to the Archaeological Survey of India but it does not come in the list of ASI-protected monuments. "However, in spite of that, the DMRC will ensure full protection of the monument," Dayal added.

SOURCE

27th October 2009, Hindustan Times

NEGLECTED HISTORY

There's more to Mehrauli Archeological Park than meets the eye at the first glance. One has to walk miles before one gets a glimpse of the Jamali-Kamali Masjid, Balban's tomb or Quli Khan Ka Maqbara. The Metcalfe canopy (which in its tree-less days allowed a view of the entire park), Raja Ki Baoli and Gumti, further down, are well-preserved examples of the architecture of a bygone era. Even though the park has a lot to offer, it is yet to become a tourist hotspot. A conservationist from the Archeological Survey of India, who was spotted at Balban's Tomb, which is currently undergoing excavation, said, "ASI has tried to conserve some structures here and in order to make it a popular tourist attraction, we are thinking of allowing entry from the park side of the Qutub. Once that is done, it will attract a lot of attention. There are other changes that we are pondering on before the Commonwealth Games start." Badley Ram, who accompanied us to the place, said that not many people come here after seeing Qutub. "Only the interested lot, who are either foreigners or scholars, come to this park. Because of the lack of visitors, the Jamali-Kamali Masjid is opened only on select occasions. Keeping the mosque unlocked without any supervision will only result in a littered site." Mehrauli Archeological Park has certainly not got its due. Nalini David, a professional who is planning to start her own NGO, had come with her family for sightseeing here and said, "Once the authorities start publicising the place and charge an entry fee, the place will definitely start looking up. People also have perceptions about this place, like it might not be safe, that there'll be no security guards around to look after the safety of the people and that there'll be no guides around to tell them about the place. Such perceptions need to be changed." After covering the huge area, when we reached Raja ki Baoli, we found two German nationals, Christoph and Angela, enjoying the peaceful surroundings. "The place is beautiful. The architecture is marvellous! It is a pity that not many people have walked through this park. Personally, I like the place because it is so quiet and serene."

SOURCE

30th October 2009, Times of India

PALIKA IN FOR SWANK MAKEOVER

Palika Bazar — the city's ultimate shopping destination where you get the best of bargains — is all set to get a facelift ahead of the Commonwealth Games 2010. The upgrade of Palika Bazar is set to begin within 20 days with tenders already having been awarded. The redevelopment plan for Palika includes installation of escalators, four capsule lifts, etc, so the market can compete with the city's malls. The project, having a total cost of Rs 22 crore, was approved in NDMC's meeting on Wednesday. Said an NDMC official: "Four escalators will be installed at Palika Bazar along with four capsule lifts and ramps to make the market disabled-friendly. We will upgrade the air-conditioning system and fire fighting system, which is very important as Palika is an underground market." Built in 1978, the market houses around 400 shops which have been alloped on licence basis and NDMC earns around Rs 6 crore from licence fee collection. Said an NDMC official: "This is the first development plan undertaken for the market. Tenders have already been awarded. It will take another 20-25 days to complete all formalities and we should be able to finish work before the Games." Four escalators will be installed in Palika Bazar both ways — two at Gate No 1 and another two at Central Hall. The cost of providing escalators is Rs 4 crore. The spiral staircases at Gate No 4 and 5 will be converted into straightflight staircases and there will be two ramps at Gate No 2 and 7. Besides, different colours and patterns will be

The easier to maintain granite flooring will replace kota stone. Toilets and drainage system will be upgraded besides carrying out facade development, installing flex-sheet signages, a false ceiling, fancy lightings, etc, to give an international look to the market. Said president of Palika Bazar shopkeeper welfare association: "A lot of tourists visit our market and installing escalators and lifts had become necessary. The air-conditioning plant will also be upgraded. We hope that the footfalls will increase after the redevelopment work is over."

SOURCE

30th October 2009, Times of India

GREENS TO CONFRONT DELHI GOVT AT SAPLING PLANTING

The "Games versus greens" debate is set to make a comeback. After allowing the felling of thousands of trees in the past three years for projects related to Commonwealth Games 2010, the Delhi government will start planting a fresh bunch of trees on the outskirts on Friday, name it after the showpiece event and call it "green". As Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit plants the saplings here at 4.30 pm, the Mayor of London will be doing the same in his city some 9,500 km away, alongside the launch of the Queen's Baton Relay. And to embarrass the government before the world at such a prestigious event, a group of activists will also be present at the venue in Delhi with black posters with the message: "This Games is Environmentally Black". "This tamasha has to be exposed to the world," said Prof. Prabhakar Rao, an environmentalist with NGO Kalpavriksh. "They have cut hundreds of trees in the past three years; this kind of plantation drives do not compensate that loss at all." In the past three years, construction of flyovers, widening of roads, revamping of stadiums like Jawaharlal Nehru stadium, Talkatora stadium, Delhi University and others, and covering of the storm-water channels (nalas) to make parking lots etc have chopped thousands of full-grown trees of various families largely on the roadside. The government mandates that for each tree felled, 10 trees will have to be planted as compensation. But due to lack of space, planting shappen on the outskirts. "The micro-environment of the city is butchered for some feel-good city-forest miles away," said Diwan Singh of NGO Natural Heritage First. "They have killed the river and chopped the trees for the Games. How can they call the Games green?" Environment secretary Dharmendra said that the plantation drives were part of Delhi's carbon offset plans. "Events like the Games involve activities that cause high carbon-dioxide emission. We need carbon-sinks like tree covers to neutralise that." While the activists are ready with their posters and a large group of youth and students to make the protest as spectacular as possible, the government is sticking to its own statistics. "In the past two years Delhi's green cover has increased by 1.68 per cent," Dharmendra said.

SOURCE

30th October 2009, Hindustan Times

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