



INTACH

DELHI CHAPTER

Weekly News Clippings – 131
15th December- 21st December

Editor's Note

Climate ke dhol drums

Ancient art finds space in games logo, motifs

CP renovation is a race against time

To rob Yamuna of sand, its course changed

Heritage quiz

The wells of solitude

ASI slams brakes on elevated road

CLIMATE KE DHOL DRUMS

A WAKE UP BID: In order to wake up the world leaders from deep slumber and inaction, the Climate Satyagrah Coalition, comprising of 30 NGOs, organised a rally from Rajghat to Jantar Mantar. "This rally is to mount effective pressure on the leaders participating in the Copenhagen summit, so that they come out with a fab deal!" Okay you mean fabulous? "No FAB is for Fair, Ambitious and Binding deal for all the nations," says Priya from Oxfam India. DHOL BAJA KE: After getting celebs like Mohit Chauhan to perform earlier, the organisers this time successfully brought the students as well as professionals out on the streets, to participate in the Climate Ke Liye Bajao event. The day – Global Day Of Climate Action – served as the right occasion to make noise, and how? Well, right from dhol to drums, from dholaks to bongos people were armed with musical instruments to serve the purpose. And the most unexpected of all were plates and spoons, which were carried by those who couldn't find any suitable instrument. JAAGO RE: But is the youth really that interested in climate disasters, "Not all, most of them prefer taking care of Farmville rather than the only planet they have. But we have to wake up because we have no other option except Earth, right?" said Brikesh Singh, a college drop-out from Mumbai, who had climbed on the London Parliament rooftop few days back, to voice his concern over climate disaster.

SOURCE

15th December 2009, Times of India

ANCIENT ART FINDS SPACE IN GAMES LOGO, MOTIFS

For those with a keen eye will spot various Mughal architecture and traditional Indian folk art inspired design elements for the 2010 Commonwealth Games. The designs adorn the logos, motifs, pictograms, wood marks and various other design patterns for the Games. The Image and Look Team of the Commonwealth Games Organizing Committee (OC), in consultation with a private design company, has taken inspiration from Delhi's architectural heritage and colorful traditional folk art while designing various games logos and pictograms. So while Jaalis (ornamental pattern which is a common feature in Mughal architecture) have been digitized to give a modern look and is being extensively used in various games designs and patterns, the traditional folk art from Uttar Pradesh, Sanjhi, is the inspiration behind the games pictograms. The pictograms for all the 17 sporting discipline that are part of the Commonwealth Games have been inspired by Sanjhi art. These sports include wrestling, athletics, archery, and weightlifting, cycling, and boxing among others. Sanjhi is a paper cutting and stencil art form from Uttar Pradesh used to tell stories. Sanjhi painting is rooted in the folk culture of the region and Vaishnava temples used it extensively in the 15th and 16th century.

Sangeeta Welinkar, Additional Director General, Image & Look, said "The designs and motifs are an amalgamation of ancient Indian architecture and traditional folk art." "Our country has a rich history of art and culture and we decided to take inspiration from it to showcase them during the games." The 2010 Commonwealth Games logo has been inspired by India's national emblem Ashoka Chakra. "Worldwide international sporting events are associated with local art and culture. The logo of 2000 Sydney Olympics was a boomerang, which is very Australian, while the logo of 2004 Athens Olympic was a wreath," said Welinkar.

SOURCE

16th December 2009, Hindustan Times

CP RENOVATION IS A RACE AGAINST TIME

The NDMC seems to be in a race against time as far as the CP re-development project is concerned, as only 30 percent of the overall work has been completed so far and there are just over 10 months to go for the Commonwealth Games 2010. The NDMC, however, sounds confident about meeting its September 2010 deadline. Conserving the heritage character of CP apart, the re-development also entails installation of eight escalators in the sub-ways on outer circle and six in the inner circle. Also, a service corridor is to be laid on the middle circle. Installation work on the outer circle- entailing two each on Panchkuian Road and Barakhamba Road and one each at Super Bazar, Minto Road, State Entry Road, Chelmsford Road and Shaheed Bhagat Singh Marg- is yet to begin. The work on the inner circle sub-ways too has only just begun. The service corridor, involving laying of 21 feet duct on the middle circle for power and telephone cables besides air-conditioning ducts, too has not begun. The traders' community is feeling jittery over blocking of the entire middle circle for nearly eight months. Already, a controversy of whether or not to use sandstone for flooring is ranging, with traders' wanting granite flooring. The NDMC has decided to go with sandstone.

SOURCE

16th December 2009, Asian Age

TO ROB YAMUNA OF SAND, ITS COURSE CHANGED

Pollution is not the only problem plaguing the Yamuna. Upstream of Wazirabad, on the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border — where till now the river had somehow managed to retain its free-flowing character before literally turning into a drain in the city — the sand mining mafia is clandestinely working to change the course of the river. The river is silently being robbed off its sand right under the nose of the administration and police. In the Palla area, just before the river is channelled into the Wazirabad canal, a temporary bank has been created in the middle of the Yamuna to trap sand, effectively shifting its flow more towards the Delhi border and creating a small sand island. A couple of days after the police arrested four people for illegal sand mining in the area, TOI visited the spot only to find that there had been no change in the situation. Two large cranes lifted sand from the river and loaded it in trucks that later drove off towards UP, all in the presence of cops. Police personnel pleaded helplessness saying that the men were operating from the UP side of the river. "We have been complaining to the flood control department about this for a while because we are not authorised to take action if the offence is carried out in the other state. The miners bring in huge machinery and carry away several truckloads of sand each day. At any point when they see the police approaching, they turn their cranes towards the UP side. Technically, the river comes under Delhi but again the police is not authorised to take action unless the agency concerned files a complaint with us," said sources. Each day, hundreds of truckloads of sand is being carried out by the miners, who police say are residents of nearby villages. Each truckload is sold for about Rs 800 on the outskirts of Delhi, basically for construction purposes. Experts say that removing small amounts of sand from the river bed manually is not a problem since the flowing water keeps replenishing the sand. However, for a river like the Yamuna, which hardly has a water flow throughout the year, this can cause serious problems. "Usage of machinery is causing a change in the natural topography.

Deep digging and drilling leads to formation of ponds and when the river floods at any point of time, there is a danger of it changing its course. This can prove to be catastrophic for the city infrastructure as well,” said Manoj Misra of the Yamuna Jiye Abhiyan. Villagers farming in the area are equally affected by the mining since the heavy machinery that is used for digging ruins their fields. Some claim that their land has also been appropriated for use during mining. “Many of these men come in from the Delhi side,” they said, contrary to the police version. “We have caught some of them but then they damaged our fields and crops and we had to let them off,” said Pratap Chand, a farmer. SDM of the area, Ashish Mohan, told TOI that his department would be taking strict action against the miners, even if that meant taking a boat across to the Delhi border and apprehending them there. “I have also written to the area DCP on Tuesday, asking him to appoint the Alipur SHO as the nodal officer for taking action in other such cases in future,” he said.

SOURCE

18th December 2009, Times of India

HERITAGE QUIZ

The zonal finals of the CBSE Heritage India quiz were held at Delhi Public School, R. K. Puram. It is one of the programmes promoted by the CBSE with the objective of creating interest among students about the rich heritage and cultural diversity of the country. Aditya Nath Mubayi, wellknown quizmaster and co-founder of Quizcraft, a Delhi based quizzing foundation, welcomed all the young quizzers from schools across the country. There were nine schools taking part including the host school, DPS R. K. Puram. Each team consisted of three members. The winners of the Delhi pre-finals were DAV School, Pitampura, and New Era Public School. In the regional finals, there was tough competition between these two teams and New Era Public School emerged as winners for Delhi. The Delhi regional finals were followed by the Guwahati finals. Three schools took part in it, of which Sainik School, Assam, was declared the winner. The zonal finals of the CBSE Heritage India quiz were held at Delhi Public School, R. K. Puram. It is one of the programmes promoted by the CBSE with the objective of creating interest among students about the rich heritage and cultural diversity of the country. Aditya Nath Mubayi, wellknown quizmaster and co-founder of Quizcraft, a Delhi based quizzing foundation, welcomed all the young quizzers from schools across the country. There were nine schools taking part including the host school, DPS R. K. Puram. Each team consisted of three members. The winners of the Delhi pre-finals were DAV School, Pitampura, and New Era Public School. In the regional finals, there was tough competition between these two teams and New Era Public School emerged as winners for Delhi. The Delhi regional finals were followed by the Guwahati finals. Three schools took part in it, of which Sainik School, Assam, was declared the winner.

SOURCE

17th December 2009, Hindustan Times

THE WELLS OF SOLITUDE

A mid business towers and residential apartments of Connaught Place, this 14th century baoli, an ancient step-well, is like a blast from the past. Flanked on both sides by niches, chambers and passageways, the 104 stone steps, descending into the well's dried bottom, have three levels. As you enter, look around for a mosque on one side, or listen to the gurgling sound of hundreds of pigeons. Better still, walk down the stairs. The silence deepens, the city skyline disappears and daylight fades. Centuries ago, this was a reservoir as well as a summer refuge for heat-stricken citizens, living in pre-Lodhi times. As the water level plunged, the people would seek a cooler retreat in the baoli's lower reaches. Till 2002, there was water (and filth) here. Boys swam, lovers threw wish-making coins... and the depressed jumped. But the popularity of this baoli, spanning 60 metres in length and 15 metres in width, has evaporated with its water. Despite being a 10-minutes-walk from Connaught Place's N Block, its ticket-less entrance hardly sees any visitors, except that rare backpacker or the odd school tour. Occasionally, some office-goers --

the few who know about it -- drop in. The baoli's solitude is remarkable, but it's a pity in some ways. Here is a beautiful relic that has travelled far in its time capsule and is holding its own against gleaming skyscrapers and yet its magnificence lies unacknowledged. Where Hailey Road, Near KG Marg Time 9 am to 5 pm

SOURCE

19th December 2009, Hindustan Times

ASI NOTICE TO DMRC, GAMES PANEL

The Archaeological Survey of India has issued notices to several agencies, including the Delhi Metro and Commonwealth Games Committee, over 92 structures constructed within prohibited areas in centrally protected monuments. The notices were sent on the instruction of the Delhi High Court, which declared as illegal a high-level expert committee that granted permissions to these agencies for construction of the structures.

SOURCE

19th December 2009, Indian Express

ASI SLAMS BRAKES ON ELEVATED ROAD

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has served a notice on the public works department (PWD) to “cease and desist” from carrying out any further construction of the Barapullah elevated road connecting Sarai Kale Khan with JN Stadium. The elevated road project is one of the key Commonwealth Games-related projects, which is being built to facilitate the movement of sportspersons from the Games village in east Delhi to JL Nehru Stadium. The project is scheduled to be completed by June 2010. “About 60% of the work has been completed. We don’t know for how many days or weeks the work will suffer. It will delay the completion further since the momentum will be hampered. Only intervention at top government level will help since the matter is now beyond the bureaucracy,” a PWD official said. The ASI notice said a portion of the road project was being built in a prohibited area of 100 meters from the protected limit of the monument, Barapullah Bridge. Though the agency had granted permission for the construction within the prohibited area, it has shown a recent Delhi High Court verdict to stop work. The HC in its October 30 order had held that the ASI does not have the power to grant permission to construct within a prohibited area and had directed the central government to issue notices to the violators. The ASI has asked the PWD to submit why no action should be taken against the PWD, which has surprised the department officials. “We started work after getting necessary permission from the ASI, clearance from the Group of Ministers at the Centre and also the Delhi Urban Arts Commission (DUAC). They have also mentioned in the notice that they have given the go ahead to the project on June 17, 2008,” a senior PWD official said. He said the department had also agreed to follow the ASI recommendations for this special permission. Officials maintained that this should be taken as a special case considering it’s of national importance. The contractor of the project has already completed the substructure of the piers at the ‘controversial’ site. Until the entire portion is completed, the project would be of no use, officials said. Amid business towers and residential apartments of Connaught Place, this 14th century baoli, an ancient step-well, is like a blast from the past. Flanked on both sides by niches, chambers and passageways, the 104 stone steps, descending into the well's dried bottom, have three levels. As you enter, look around for a mosque on one side, or listen to the gurgling sound of hundreds of pigeons. Better still, walk down the stairs. The silence deepens, the city skyline disappears and daylight fades. Centuries ago, this was a reservoir as well as a summer refuge for heat-stricken citizens, living in pre-Lodhi times. As the water level plunged, the people would seek a cooler retreat in the baoli's lower reaches. Till 2002, there was water (and filth) here. Boys swam, lovers threw wish-making coins... and the depressed jumped. But the popularity of this baoli, spanning 60 metres in length and 15 metres in width, has evaporated with its water.

SOURCE

19th December 2009, Times of India

WHOSE LAND IS THIS ANYWAY?

Northern Railway (NR) seems to be headed for trouble. The ASI recently issued it a show cause notice for unauthorized construction within the prohibited 100m zone at Nila Gumbad. The monument is a centrally-protected site in Nizamuddin. NR had been given a week to reply to the notice of December 10 failing which ASI can take a decision that could even mean demolition of the ongoing construction. According to sources, NR is constructing a five-storey structure in the prohibited zone without taking permission from ASI, a violation under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. What has further irked ASI is that the unauthorized construction is in close proximity of Humayun's Tomb — a Unesco world heritage site. The construction, sources said, was just 50m from the monument and was forbidden without the written approval of the director general of ASI. "The entire complex is a conservation zone. Crores are being spent to improve the landscape and make Humayun's Tomb complex more visitor-friendly. It is appalling that NR is constructing a building that could not only harm the monuments but upset the setting of Nila Gumbad. Recently unearthed archaeological evidence show the original extent of the gumbad," said an official. The railway officials, however, refute all such claims. According to a Northern Railway spokesperson: "We haven't violated any of the ASI rules. We measured the distance from the structure and it is outside the prohibited zone. ASI has been seeking permission to build a road on our land, but we have decided to use it as per our operational needs. We have replied to the showcause notice stating the same on Monday." ASI officials said they were ready for a joint inspection and even if the construction was outside 100m, it was still a regulated area and permission was required. Interestingly, for the past two years ASI has been seeking permission to use 1-acre land owned by NR behind Nila Gumbad to realign a road that divides the gumbad from Humayun's Tomb complex. However, NR refuses to budge saying it cannot part with the land. The controversy even reached Parliament with ASI being questioned on whether the contention was creating hurdles in the protection and preservation of Nila Gumbad — the oldest Mughal structure in the city. ASI officials say conservation work on Nila Gumbad cannot start till the road separating it from Humayun's Tomb complex is moved behind the structure. It's for this that one acre of railway-owned land is required. But with NR insisting it needs the land to store track material, the conservation project seems to have hit a dead-end. The railway-owned land, sources say, is a tale of neglect. While the stored track material is an eyesore, a heap of garbage is also dumped there. The historical Charbagh surrounding the gumbad is being used for storage and the heavily-stacked track material has damaged Nila Gumbad's original wall. NR has even suggested a skyway to connect Nila Gumbad with Humayun's Tomb. General Manager, Northern Railway, Vivek Sahai, further proposed to build a concrete path around Nila Gumbad and utilize the remaining space for storing emergency material. The suggestion left experts fuming. With Humayun's Tomb on the west, Nila Gumbad on the south and Gurdwara Damdama Sahib lying north, experts say the construction was not possible.

SOURCE

21st December 2009, Times of India

ELEVATED ROAD: DELHI GOVT TO MOVE COURT AGAINST ASI NOTICE

The Delhi government has decided to go to the court for quashing the notice served to the PWD by the ASI raising objection to the elevated road over Barapulla that is a heritage property. Construction is not allowed within the 100 meter radius of a heritage building. A senior of the PWD said that a committee of experts of ASI served notice to the government that there should be no construction near Barapulla Bridge as it was a heritage property. This notice affected the work of the elevated road being constructed to facilitate sportsmen and others during the Commonwealth Games to be held in October next year. The northern railway has constructed a bridge adjacent to Barapulla. The PWD will argue on this point. Railway is a profit-making body while the elevated road is a profit-making project, he said.

SOURCE

20th December 2009, Tribune

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