



**INTACH**

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## **[SLOW PACE OF CHANDNI CHOWK REDEVELOPMENT WORRIES MCD PANEL](#)**

EIGHT years since the plan was tabled, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is yet to make any progress in the ambitious Chandni Chowk Redevelopment Project. While the Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC) granted its preliminary conceptual approval to the project in October, the MCD Standing Committee is now worried that the civic body might miss the June 2010 deadline. The Standing Committee has now decided to hold a short-notice meeting with the concerned officials on Wednesday, seeking a detailed status report on the project. According to MCD Standing Committee Chairperson Ram Krishan Singhal, while the Corporation's city zone officials, who are directly in-charge of the project, have hired consultants and drawn up a blueprint, they have failed to do any work so far. "They have been hiring consultants for each and every part of the redevelopment project. While many areas in the Walled City have been dug up in the name of redevelopment, no work is visible as yet," Singhal said. "The year has come to an end and I am not sure how will all the work be completed in just six months," he added. "The two most essential parts of the redevelopment project are the traffic decongestion plan and the proposal to restore all heritage structures in the Walled City," he said. On the other hand, the MCD city zone officials claim that while they have overcome all the initial delays, work has already begun on the Old City traffic decongestion plan. But according to the city zone officials a new problem has arisen -the former deputy commissioner, city zone, has been transferred and considering the lack of time, the work has been transferred to MCD's project division. Thus, the city zone that had done all the preliminary work and finalised the blueprint is no longer directly involved. The plan, initiated in 2004, emphasises on decongesting the current traffic chaos and increasing pedestrian walking space by restricting vehicular traffic. Besides, the roads in Old Delhi have to be widened, including the existing 3.5 metre lanes. Officials of the project division said that now after the DUAC approval, the tendering process is being finalised. "To save time, preliminary work like digging has already begun and by next month full fledged work on the traffic plan will begin," said an official. The city zone was also supposed to carry out a door-to-door survey to identify heritage structures that need restoration. No details of the survey are available.

**[SOURCE](#)**

**[30<sup>th</sup> December 2009, Indian Express](#)**

## ROADMAP: HERITAGE PANEL DRAWS UP NEW TRAFFIC PLAN

IF a new traffic management plan around the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's (MCD) Civic Centre gets a nod from the civic agency and other authorities, it promises to add a more holistic touch to vehicular movement in the Capital from next year. Commissioned to draw up a detailed traffic management scheme for the area around the Civic Centre, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) will make its first presentation on Wednesday before the MCD's Standing Committee. The traffic plan will be in force around the MCD's 28-storey Civic Centre and will encompass Connaught Place, ITO and Shahjahanabad. If passed, the plan will be forwarded to the United Traffic and Transportation Infrastructure (Planning and Engineering) Center and the Delhi Urban Art Commission for final clearance and implementation. It is expected that once the centre opens sometime next year -it is coming up near the New Delhi railway station -- the swelling vehicular movement around it will demand strict supervision. Town planner and Convenor, Delhi Chapter, INTACH, A G K Menon said: "The upcoming centre is like a stone thrown in a pond. It will send ripples in the traffic situation. So far we have always addressed traffic problems as a local issue, building flyovers, subways and multilane signal free roads as quick solutions. But now we need to look at the total city network and work out holistic solutions." The scheme proposes exclusive lanes for buses, segregated tracks for cyclists and non-motorised vehicles and user-friendly pavements for pedestrians. "There needs to be equitable distribution of road space. According to estimates, only 13 per cent of the people in Delhi travel by cars, so why should half the road space be given to them? With dedicated bus lanes and tracks for non-motorised vehicles and pedestrians, congestion in private vehicle lanes is inevitable," Menon said. "This congestion should be seen as a solution and not a problem. When people see buses zooming past them, they will want to switch to public transport. People across the world are moving to public transport." Drawing inspiration from cities like London, the proposal has incorporated dedicated space for hawkers. The proposal has also taken into account gender safety based on recommendations made by Jagori, a city-based NGO that conducted a survey on problems women face while commuting. "We often complain that our city is unfriendly but that is because we ourselves do not interact with the city. Most of us travel in cars and live in a closed community." THE Heritage City status for the Capital that seemed to be a distant EXPRESS ARCHIVE dream till now, may get some fillip from work being initiated on several fronts due to the upcoming Commonwealth Games. With many monuments and historical sites getting a facelift, signage and heritage-related literature being prepared and heritage routes that fall on the Games venues being spruced up, the first phase of Heritage City project is being taken care of. Officials of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), a heritage conservation body that conceptualized and proposed the Heritage City project, feel the Games will facilitate the project and by the end of next year the foundation for it will be laid. A G K Menon, Convenor (Delhi Chapter) INTACH, said, "Several agencies are working on different aspects like conservation of monuments, streetscaping, arrangement of tourist buses and preparation of signage and heritage-related literature. By the end of next year the pace will be set for further preparation and when the smaller pieces are taken care of, the jigsaw puzzle will fit in." "Once the city starts shaping up and there is a comprehensive heritage identity we will request the Ministry of Culture to propose Delhi for the Heritage City status granted by the UNESCO," Menon added. The project suffered a blow initially as various agencies were involved and there was lack of coordination. The agencies involved in the project include the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Public Works Department (PWD) and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). With the Games approaching, the ASI is undertaking large-scale conservation work on 46 monuments and the Department of Archaeology will notify and protect at least 92 monuments by next September. Out of the 92, 14 monuments have been identified for conservation and a fund of Rs 7.5 crore has been sanctioned by the Union government to the state Department of Archaeology, Menon said. "The heritage routes have been sanctioned, but first the areas near the Games venues are being spruced. The route from Red Fort to Humayun's Tomb is being done on a priority basis with the ASI working on Purana Qila and the MCD has signed us up to give Firozshah Kotla a facelift." Menon told Newsline.

The INTACH and the DDA have also signed a MoU to develop the Coronation Park, proposed as the starting point of the heritage route that will go via Red Fort to Humayun's Tomb. The PWD has also commenced work on streetscaping several important roads like Lodhi Road and Bhairon Road. The Delhi Tourism and Transport Development Corporation, meanwhile, has approved the 'hop-on, hop-off' buses proposed for the heritage routes and is in the process of identifying suitable buses and estimating the number of buses required. "We are preparing extensive heritage-related literature for tourists who will visit the city during Games. This will be useful even after the event is over. The ten heritage walks that we had proposed to the Delhi government have also been approved," Menon added.

#### **SOURCE**

**30<sup>th</sup> December 2009, Indian Express**

#### **POWER CABLES TO GO DOWN UNDER**

Delhi government has asked the power distribution companies to remove the overhead cables from major roads and some congested areas. Delhi's Finance and Urban Development Minister Dr A.K. Walia on Wednesday said the overhead lines crossing the main roads were giving Delhi a shabby look. "They are an eyesore... not in tune with our vision of making Delhi a world class city," Walia said. The issue of conversion of overhead power lines into underground ones goes back a long way. For over a year now discom BSES has been seeking funding from the government for laying underground power cables in the Walled City, Paharganj and Karol Bagh. To escape funding of these works, discoms usually cite an ancient provision called Rule 82 of the Electricity Act, which says that the agency proposing the removal of overhead wires must bear the cost of the work. But earlier this month, the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission ordered the discoms to carry out expenditure on their own to remove the overhead wires at select areas. Now, three discoms are to spend Rs 50 crore each in the first phase of work and turn the overhead wires underground.

#### **SOURCE**

**31<sup>st</sup> December 2009, Hindustan Times**

#### **SNEAK PREVIEW**

**BONANZA FOR SPORTS LOVERS** With the government promising a bunch of goodies for 2010 Games, Delhiites can hope for world-class facilities. While infrastructure, transport and beautification are getting a boost, it's the sports facilities that will get a shot in the arm with the renovation of stadia. Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium has got an entirely new look while Thyagaraj Stadium has become the first green sporting venue in India. The cycling velodrome at IG stadium is the ideal spot for fitness enthusiasts while SP Mukherjee swimming complex, next to the refurbished Talkatora Stadium, is the best place for water sports. Dr Karni Singh range too promises to be of international standards. **SHOWCASING HERITAGE** Newly-renovated historic sites, illuminated monuments and special heritage buses, complete with trained guides — the city will turn tourist-friendly. Prominent monuments like Safdarjung Tomb, Red Fort and Purana Qila are getting a facelift with more facilities but the government is keen to promote lesser visited monuments like Tughlaqabad Fort and Lal Kot. By June, the first double-decker heritage bus will start running while INTACH's plan for Delhi's first heritage stretch — Red Fort to Nizamuddin — may also be implemented. A number of lesser-known and neglected monuments will be taken over by Delhi government and INTACH for conservation. **COMFORT FOR FLIERS** With the new integrated terminal at IGI Airport likely to open in the first week of July, fliers can look forward to a world-class experience. The building should be completed by the end of March. The first airline to move into the swanky new building will most likely be Air India. By July, all international carriers and full-cost domestic carriers — Jet, Kingfisher and Air India — will move their operations to T3 while the new domestic terminal 1D will be converted into the first exclusive low-cost carrier terminal

## **SOURCE**

**1<sup>st</sup> January 2010, Times of India**

### **DELHI RANKS THIRD IN SURVEY ON FOREST COVER DENSITY**

Despite pressing needs for land in various developmental projects, the national Capital will come third after Lakshwadeep and Chandigarh in terms of percentage of geographical area under tree cover. "Considering the percentage of geographical area under tree cover, the highest rank goes to Lakshwadeep (12.50 per cent) followed by Chandigarh (9.65 per cent) and Delhi (8.29 per cent)," according to a forest survey, the report of which was released recently. Daman and Diu ranks fourth at 8.04 per cent while Goa (7.73 per cent) and Kerala (7.21 per cent) come fifth and sixth, the report said, while giving comprehensive details on forest status of the states as in 2007. Delhi has a total geographical area 1,483.01 sq km of which 123 sq km is under tree cover. The India State of Forest Report 2009 said while the forest cover increased slightly by 14 sq km, the capital city's tree cover rose by 16 sq km from 107 sq km to 123 sq km during the two-year period mainly due to extensive plantation carried out by the state government. Overall, Delhi's forest and tree cover have increased to 176.58 sq km between 2005 and 2007, thereby constituting 20.2 per cent of the total geographical area of the capital city. Tree cover comprises patches outside the recorded forest area exclusive of forest cover and less than minimum mappable area (one hectare). Such small patches comprising block, linear and scattered trees are not delineated as forest cover during interpretation of satellite data. The forest cover alone constitutes 11.91 per cent of the total 1483.01 square km geographical area, and comprises 6.76 sq km very dense forest (as against previous nil), 49.84 sq km moderately dense forest, and 119.98 sq km open forest. New Delhi district also known as Lutyens' Delhi has the highest forest cover at 46.60 per cent of geographical area, followed by South Delhi (31.46 per cent) and South-West Delhi (10.08 per cent). However, when compared to 2005, there was no change in the green cover status in central, south, west, south-west and New Delhi districts in 2007. East Delhi has shown a decline of 0.29 sq km because of tree felling needed to pave way for developmental projects. Tree cover in the country has been estimated to be 92,769 sq km in 2007 which is 2.82 per cent of the geographical area against 91,663 sq km (2.80 per cent) in 2005. Tree cover constitutes the largest area in Maharashtra (9,466 sq km) followed by Gujarat (8,390 sq km), Rajasthan (8,274 sq km) and Uttar Pradesh (7,381 sq km).

## **SOURCE**

**4<sup>th</sup> January 2010, Pioneer**

### **DELHI ONE OF THE HOTTEST DESTINATIONS OF 2010**

FOR the last five years, Delhi has been gearing up for its moment in the sun -- the Commonwealth Games, scheduled to be held in October 2010. From ministers to bureaucrats to the man on the street, we have heard them all wax eloquent about the surge of tourists expected to hit the Capital. On eve of the New Year, several international travel websites and airlines, including the Lonely Planet, listed Delhi as one of the top 10 destinations for the year. Calling it one of the best times to visit the Capital, Lonely Planet describes the preparations for Commonwealth Games in upbeat terms: "The Games put this vibrant, chaotic Capital in the global spotlight, and the last few years have seen Delhi streamlined (as far as the unruly city can be) with a flurry of new infrastructure, including a new metro system and a flashy Games village." Delhi has lot of competition though. The Lonely Planet's list includes watching total eclipse from Easter Island; FIFA World Cup, which for the first time is coming to Africa; Santiago Pilgrimage in Spain, especially since it is the Holy Year; the World Expo in Beijing; the Peking to Paris Motor Race where most participants drive vintage cars and the Winter Olympics in Vancouver. The other favourite among Indian destinations is the Pushkar camel fair in Rajasthan. The British Airways, too, listed Delhi as one of hottest destinations. "The 2010 Commonwealth Games will be a huge attraction, with Delhi playing the first time host to the Games," the report states. The World Travel Guide, another renowned publication, lists Delhi as one of the most sought after destinations. Chief Minister Sheila Diskhit is elated with the listings. "Delhi is an attractive

city, a unique mix of history and modern," she said. "And we are working hard to make it much more comfortable and culturally active city."

**SOURCE**

**1<sup>st</sup> January 2010, Indian Express**

**A VIEW FROM THE TOP**

BEGUMPUR, located close to Mother's International School on Aurobindo Marg, looks like just another urban village. But there was perhaps a time, way back in the 14th century, when the entire subcontinent was politically and administratively controlled from a building located right at the heart of this village. Bijay Mandal, as it is called, is in all probability the thousand-pillar palace of Muhammad bin Tughlaq that Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta described in his writings. Though thousand pillar or hazaar sutun as Battuta calls it, may seem an exaggeration, archaeological findings of treasures like precious stones, ivory, gold, pearls, red coral, porcelain and coins from the complex in the early 20th century does make it probable that this was indeed the palace of the mighty Tughlaqs. The building is sturdy and somewhat stern with octagonal pavilion and towers and is devoid of any ornamentation. Though essentially a Tughlaq palace, portions of the building are from an earlier period. While the main platform and the hypostyle hall was built in the 13th century by the Khilji rulers, the Tughlaqs added platforms, octagonal pavilion, columned hypostyle hall, twin towers and treasure pits. In the 15th and 16th century, the Lodi rulers used the complex and added a domed building and a pavilion to it. Despite being a seat of power, Bijay Mandal, unlike the other citadels of Delhi, seems all but forgotten. But for architecture enthusiasts, this is perhaps the most complicated of Delhi's heritage buildings. For, it is not easy to ascertain the actual purpose of each and every part of the complex. The eastern part of the upper platform has two barrel vaulted basement rooms and from the platform, one can see a singlestorey hall with an octagonal tower. There are remains of verandahs, doorways leading to arcades and apartments. Stone columns support the roof and the lower pavilions have arched doorways. One can only imagine the sultan squeezing his way up the staircase to have a view of the countryside. Today, of course, from the octagonal pavilion both Qutub Minar and the commercial complex of Nehru Place seem almost eye-level--it is like seeing the entire South Delhi under one skyline.

**SOURCE**

**3<sup>rd</sup> January 2010, Indian Express**

**NILA GUMBAD STAND-OFF: PM REQUESTED TO RESOLVE ISSUE**

THE Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, M S Gill, and the Chairman of Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC), KT Ravindran, have written to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh seeking his intervention in resolving the deadlock between the Railways and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) over the area adjoining the Nila Gumbad. The Railways and the ASI has been sparring over the ownership and maintenance of the land around the Mughal-era monument, as a result of which a question mark now hangs over its conservation. Following a report by Newslite, Gill and Ravindran have urged the PM to save the monument by resolving the issue. The ASI had requested the Railways to extend the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two, signed in March 2004, to allow the heritage body to undertake a beautification drive in the monument's vicinity. It had also requested that a road be diverted so that the heritage structure could be incorporated in the Humayun's Tomb complex. The Railways had, however, turned it down, claiming the ASI had failed to do much during the five-year period after the MoU was signed. The Railways, meanwhile, also undertook construction, prohibited within 100 m of the protected site, which was later stalled after an FIR was filed by the ASI. Gill has earlier lived in Nizamuddin East area and frequented the Nila Gumbad, which stands in the buffer zone of the Humayun's Tomb, a World Heritage Site. His letter states: "I have a deep interest in monuments and archaeology and have studied the monument. It is a valuable monument, evidence of close link with Timur's Samarkand."

The blue green tiles and the patterns on the side can be seen on Timur's own monument in Samarkand. For students of cultural history, it is a visible link. This valuable monument is suffering from the conflict between the Railways and the ASI and the indifference and lack of urgency shown by both. I request you to intervene and give the necessary direction to resolve this conflict, which is doing such damage to a historically valuable monument. Years have passed in this argument... Kindly give the necessary directions to properly preserve the Nila Gumbad and link it with the Humayun Complex." KT Ravindran, DUAC chairman, told Newslines, "We have written to the Prime Minister pointing out the significance of this monument and the incongruous development around the area. Moreover, the illegal construction near the site was not approved by us. This is a serious offence on the part of the Railways."

**SOURCE**

**4<sup>th</sup> January 2010, Indian Express**

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

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