



INTACH

DELHI CHAPTER

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URBAN ARTS BODY INSPECTS PARKING SITE

A team of Delhi Urban Arts Commission (DUAC) on Wednesday visited the site proposed for a six-storey underground parking on Sher Shah Suri Marg. The team expressed its displeasure at the way construction was being carried out at the site without sanctions. The parking lot has been proposed for the Delhi High Court. Sources said the DUAC team found hundreds of workers at the site with almost 30 feet of earth dug up. The project had earlier run into trouble when the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) issued 'stop work' notice to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), which is getting the work done for the high court. The work threatened the existence of a tomb on the premises, which has been notified as a heritage structure under the NDMC's jurisdiction. This makes it mandatory for any construction in the area to have an approval of the heritage conservation committee. In January, the DMRC put up barricades to facilitate work on an underpass connecting the parking site with the court. Neither the NDMC and nor the DUAC or the Unified Traffic and Transport Integrated Planning and Engineering Centre, a regulatory body for infrastructure projects, had given a clearance for the same. "Last week we had called the DMRC for a meeting and today, we went there (at the site) for clear assessment," said DUAC chairperson K.T. Ravindran. "We have asked the DMRC to come to us through the NDMC only," he said and refused to speak further.

SOURCE

11th February 2010, Hindustan Times

HISTORICAL MONUMENT VISIT

INDIA is a land rich in culture and heritage and our very own Delhi depicts this rich heritage in abundance. On January 21, a cold winter morning amid thick fog, we set out with 82 students of Class VII on a heritage-cumnature walk within the confined walls of The Old Fort. Many of us pass by this looming structure almost every day on our way to work, as it is situated in the heart of the city. It has been there since ages, a constant reminder of our rich heritage, of Sher Shah Suri and Humayun. The first pleasant surprise that awaited me as I stepped into the periphery of the fort was the cleanliness and greenery of the place. It was lush green and spotlessly clean. The fog and the mist seemed to have added to the aura of the monument. It was a two-hour walk, our first stop being Qila-i-Kuhna -- the mosque where Humayun prayed. We then proceeded to the Sher Mandal, the library from the steps of which Humayun.

fell to his death Our next stop was the legendary Indraprastha, the place from where the Pandavas were said to have ruled ancient India. We next walked to the step-well or the 'Baoli' as it is called. It is said to be the bathing place of the women of that time. Our last stop was the museum where we saw interesting finds and remains of that era. AT nine in the morning, we went to the Old Fort from school. The guide told us that it was built by Sher Shah Suri in 1541 and parts of the fort, mainly the southern gate was built by Emperor Humayun. There are three gates -- the western, southern and northern gate. The monument is made up of Delhi quartzite stone, white and black marble. We saw the Qila-iKuhna mosque, having the beautifully carved western wall with verses of the Quran inscribed on it. We also saw the excavation site, the Pandavas' city Indraprastha's remains, Sher Mandal -- Humayun's library, the Baoli, the Vasu pond where the Muslims wash their hands and feet before offering prayers and the museum -- it consists of sculptures, coins, toys, jewellery and crockery used in different periods of our past. It was a learning experience. THE Old Fort was built by Sher Shah Suri. Legend has it that this site was the site of Indraprastha, the capital of the Pandavas in the Mahabharata. It is made up of red sandstone. The fort has three gates -- Humayun Darwaza, Talaqi Darwaza and Bara Darwaza. Through Bara Darwaza people enter the fort these days. Inside the fort is the Kuhna Masjid. It is considered a masterpiece of architecture. It is made up of marble and red sandstone. The walls of the fort are 18 metres high at some places. At the foot of the fort is a lake where the Delhi Tourism has arrangements for boating and a sound-and-light show. Though Sher Shah Suri started building the city, it was Mughal Emperor Humayun who completed it. In spite of being more than 500 years old, the fort still retains its majesty. JANUARY 21 was a very interesting day for all of us. We were taken back to the history of the Mughal Era. We visited the Purana Qila. The Purana Qila was started by Sher Shah Suri and completed by Humayun. The damaged walls of the fort still described the beauty of that time. 'Qila-i-kuhna', one of the most beautiful mosques in Delhi is also a part of this fort.

SOURCE

11th February 2010, Indian Express

METRO-DUAC FACE-OFF ON WORK AT TOMB

The construction of an underground parking lot opposite Delhi High Court seems to have resulted in a tug-of-war between Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC). During a site visit on Tuesday morning, DUAC members found deep digging around a 16th century Lodiperiod tomb situated in the middle of the construction activity — thus raising fears that the structure's foundation may be weakened. The members also reportedly discovered newly-developed cracks in the structure facade. DMRC, however, has refuted these claims. Said DUAC member Ratish Nanda: "We inspected the site and to our disbelief, construction work was continuing in spite of a stop-work order by NDMC. Heavy construction equipment is being used just a few metres from the monument. We will discuss the issue in the next commission meeting." Delhi Metro authorities, meanwhile, contended that the cracks had been present even before construction started. "We have documents of the condition survey carried out before work started on the site. The cracks have not been caused due to any activity carried out by DMRC. We can prove it on record," said a DMRC spokesperson. DMRC also claimed it had installed sophisticated gadgets at the site to monitor the state of the tomb "as is done at other Metro construction sites". "Supportive walls were put up before construction started to secure the tomb as the structure appeared weak. In fact, DUAC chairman had appreciated the instrumentation," said the spokesperson. But according to sources, heritage experts have condemned DMRC for building brick walls inside the monument to support the structure saying DMRC was just the contractor and "it had no business to tamper with an ancient structure as it was not qualified to do so". Said a commission member:

“DMRC should have brought in either the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) or the state archaeology department to consolidate the structure.” Experts also pointed that cracks had developed in the foundation of the monument caused by “30-feet digging” in the vicinity of the structure. And that there was documented proof, including the Intach listing, that the 16th century structure did not have any cracks earlier and was always in a stable condition. However, DUAC chief K T Ravindran, who was also present during the site visit, said he could not comment on any damage caused to the structure as of now. “The commission members had gone to the spot to get a realistic assessment before the project came up in the DUAC meeting next week. I can’t comment about any damage to the monument at this point because we are yet to get reports on this. There are also speculations that work has been going on without the requisite permission but we will look into all of that only when the project is tabled in the meeting,” he said. DMRC is reportedly only carrying out “preliminary work” at the site and actual construction work is yet to begin. The corporation had applied for permission for the project to NDMC in May 2009. “An in-principle approval for the fully-automated parking lot at Sher Shah Road was issued by NDMC in September 2008. The formal approval was to be issued after the submission of execution drawing for which an application was submitted, along with other details, on May 28, 2009,” said the DMRC spokesperson. He added that NOCs from other key regulatory/statutory authorities concerned — including Central Vista Committee, ASI, Heritage Conservation Committee, chief fire officer, forest department of Delhi government, environment authorities, traffic police, agencies like IGL, MTNL, and DTC involved in utility diversion — had already been secured. “We have also sought approval of DUAC for streetscaping work which will be carried out much later as it is an underground parking lot which doesn’t affect the aesthetics of the surrounding area,” said the spokesperson. After NDMC recently notified the tomb as a protected heritage building, the civic body asked DMRC to seek approval of the Heritage Conservation Committee, which was reportedly granted on January 11 this year. NDMC spokesperson Anand Tiwari, however, confirmed that DMRC had not yet got the green signal from NDMC after the stop-work notice was issued in October last year. “The permission from DUAC has not yet come through to our knowledge so the construction work at the parking lot cannot commence,” he stated. The project is slated for completion before the Commonwealth Games. DMRC officials said the plan was to clear out the area before the Games so that it doesn’t wear a shoddy, dirty look.

SOURCE

11th February 2010, Times of India

DELHI POLICE HISTORY SHINES AMONG 3,700 ENTRIES

Fox History and Entertainment Channel in association with the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) on Wednesday announced the national winners of its first nationwide school engagement programme. Titled “My City My History”, the programme launched last November received over 3,700 entries from different schools highlighting the historic treasures of their respective cities. The channel will shoot a short film with each winner at his/her chosen historic location and the series will be telecast in March. Speaking after a heritage walk covering Sheesh Gumbad, Bara Gumbad and the tombs of Sikander Lodhi and Muhammad Shah Sayyid here in Delhi, INTACH Chairman S.K. Misra said: “We have tied up with Fox History and Entertainment Channel to motivate children to write on different aspects of our heritage. Since we are fast losing our heritage, we are trying to create awareness so that our future generation works for preservation and protection of our monuments. Awareness has to start at the school level.” Rishita Ray, a Class VII student of Delhi Public School, R.K. Puram, who won a prize for her story on “History of the Delhi Police”, has dwelt on the long history of policing through the famed institution of the Kotwal. “An organised form of

policing was established by the British after the First War of Independence in 1857 with the adoption of the Indian Police Act of 1861. Delhi being a part of Punjab remained a unit of the Punjab Police even after becoming the Capital of India in 1912. In the same year, the first Chief Commissioner of Delhi was appointed and was vested with the powers and functions of the Inspector-General of Police," says Rishita, who is contemplating joining the police force. Hitesh Shetty's "Out of Ashes: The Taj Hotel" deals with the terrorist attack in Mumbai. Jamshedji Tata build the magnificent hotel because he was denied entry to a British hotel in Bombay. "In order to build a hotel for the Indians he did extensive travelling in Europe. Another interesting feature is that the entrance to the hotel was originally from its back and not facing the harbour as it is today.....Its real test was when it was nearly brought on the edge of collapse by a terrorist attack in 2008. Even though many were convinced that it would shut down, it has opened its doors once again." Bangalore's Karishma Shiraj Mulani, whose story is on "Namma Bengaluru began with a handful of boiled beans", says: "Bangalore cannot be complete without its bean. After all it was the thing that helped it gain its name. The story goes that King Vira Ballala of the Hoysala dynasty had set out on a hunting expedition. He lost his way in the dense forest and panicked. Finally he met an old woman who offered him boiled green beans. Later he named the entire city as 'bele-bendra-kalu-ooru' which in Kannada means the place of boiled green beans." Aneequa Ahmed from Kolkata, who wrote on "Loreto Day School", and Gourav Sharma, who wrote on "The Leh Palace", are the other national winners.

SOURCE

11th February 2010, Hindu

POLE TURNS EYESORE FOR TUGHLAQ-ERA STRUCTURE

Imagine a newly renovated house complete with lush green lawns and fresh paint. And now imagine an electrical pole bang in front of it. Similar is the fate of a 14th Century monument at Wazirabad in north Delhi. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) protected Wazirabad tomb, the mosque in the complex and an adjoining bridge are being spruced up for the Commonwealth Games. But a electric pole in front of it spoils the façade. The complex is located off the main road and is visible from the Ring Road. The pole, once used as a power department's feeder pole for local transformer, was placed there before the 1994 notification that made all area within 100 metres of a centrally protected monument as prohibited area. There is no transformer now and all that remains is the pole with two stretch wires. "It is the monument that should be the centre piece of development in the area. The pole needs to be removed," said Nayanjot Lahiri, professor of History at Delhi University and an authority on historical archaeology. As part of conservation work, the ASI is carrying out pointing (use of traditional mortar to give finishing touch to brickwork) and water proofing of the terrace of the tomb and the mosque. They also plan to reinforce the bridge, which is still in use. The work is being carried out at a cost of Rs 18.5 lakh. "We are taking up the issue with the power company and planning to remove this soon," said K.K. Muhammed, ASI Delhi Circle chief. Stating that the pole can be removed in the interest of heritage, Ajay Maharaj, spokesperson for the North Delhi Power Limited, discom for the area, said: "The ASI has to put in an application and pay for its relocation."

SOURCE

12th February 2010, Hindustan Times

SOON, MONUMENT ACTS IN 12 LANGUAGES

In an effort to create awareness among the masses, the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities will soon come out with translated copies of the Acts for conservation and protection of monuments and antiquities in 12 regional languages. The mission, who is working towards creating a national register of all monuments and antiquities, will distribute the translated copies across the country so that people are able to identify monuments and antiquities in their locality and thereby report to the Mission about unlisted heritage properties.

SOURCE

12th February 2010, Indian Express

GOEL SLAMS GOVT FOR DELAYING CHANDNI CHOWK REDEVELOPMENT

Senior BJP leader Vijay Goel on Friday blamed the state government for the delay in commencement of redevelopment at Chandni Chowk. He demanded the government release the necessary funds to MCD so that the civic body can start work on improving main roads and basic amenities in the area. Goel alleged the government was spending crores on CP's restoration but nothing was being done for Chandni Chowk. He said lakhs of foreign and Indian tourists are like to come Delhi for Commonwealth Games 2010. "While Rs 900 crore has been earmarked for upliftment of CP and other Lutyens' Delhi buildings, not a single penny has been spent to preserve havelis," he said.

SOURCE

13th February 2010, Times of India

'GOVT FAILED TO IMPROVE OLD DELHI'

Former Union minister and senior BJP leader Vijay Goel on Friday demanded better infrastructure and facilities for the Walled City, alleging that the authorities have "failed to improve" the face of historic Chandni Chowk area. Mr. Goel, a former MP from the Chandni Chowk seat, also criticized Union minister Kapil Sibal, who represents the constituency in Lok Sabha, for failing to fulfill promises he made during the election campaign.

SOURCE

13th February 2010, Asian Age

SHED A TEAR AND SOME MONY FOR SHAHJAHANABAD: GOEL

Former Union Minister Vijay Goel on Friday accused the Congress government at the Centre and in Delhi of neglecting the historic and beautiful Shahjahanabad area of Delhi, which is known for its historic and culturally rich havelis, in preparation for the Commonwealth Games in the city later this year. Addressing a press conference, the BJP general secretary said it pained him to see the deterioration condition of Chandni Chowk. He demanded that the Delhi Government immediately release Rs.500 crore to the MCD so that the civic body can start work on rehabilitation of the buildings on the main roads of Chandni Chowk and provide basic civic amenities like public toilets and streetlights, and remove the overhead cables and wires and lay them underground.

SOURCE

13th February 2010, Hindu

COUPLE BEWARE, ASI IS KEEPING WATCH

This Valentine's Day, think twice before you decide to scribble proof of your eternal love on the walls of a protected monument in the Capital. Alarmed by the rising incidents of couples who disfigure walls of popular monuments on Valentine's Day, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has deployed special staff at selected sites just to keep watch on this day. Officials said that while earlier the erring couples were let off with warnings, this time they would be fined if caught defacing a monument. On Valentine's Day many couple Purana Qila, Safdarjung Tomb and Lodhi Garden monuments. Other popular haunts for couples include Humayun's Tomb and Red Fort. "In fact, Red Fort has become the latest and most popular haunt for couples. We are deploying up to half a dozen more private security guards at selected sites where a close watch will be kept on the movement of visitors, particularly couples," said a senior official. "Anyone caught will have to pay a hefty penalty as defacing monuments is a crime under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1954." Apart from the popular monuments, this This Valentine's Day, think twice before you decide to scribble proof of your eternal love on the walls of a protected monument in the Capital. Alarmed by the rising incidents of couples who disfigure walls of popular monuments on Valentine's Day, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has deployed special staff at selected sites just to keep watch on this day. Officials said that while earlier the erring couples were let off with warnings, this time they would be fined if caught defacing a monument. On Valentine's Day many couple Purana Qila, Safdarjung Tomb and Lodhi Garden monuments. Other popular haunts for couples include Humayun's Tomb and Red Fort. "In fact, Red Fort has become the latest and most popular haunt for couples.

We are deploying up to half a dozen more private security guards at selected sites where a close watch will be kept on the movement of visitors, particularly couples," said a senior official "Anyone caught will have to pay a hefty penalty as defacing monuments is a crime under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1954." Apart from the popular monuments, this time ASI is also focusing on tombs and gumbads in Mehrauli area which have fallen victim to vandalism and defacement in the past. "Monuments like Zafar Mahal, Adham Khan's Tomb and several other monuments have been badly scarred by visitors. Here, it is more difficult to keep a check on visitors as many of the tombs are located in village areas. But this time, protection of these monuments is high on our priority list," said an ASI official. In the last few years, Delhi Police had been called up by the ASI when they caught couples attempting to harm monuments in protected areas. With security against defacement becoming tighter, some officials said people have started focusing their attention outside monuments to public walls. An example for this is the South Extension underpass that has been defaced with graffiti, love messages, caricatures or drawings. A senior Delhi government official admitted: "Mostly people deface monuments and not public walls because chances of being caught at monuments are less. Normally we ask traffic police to keep a watch but this is not a solution. We have to educate people, especially those from the rural areas, on how graffiti spoils the beauty of our city." The Union tourism ministry recently launched a campaign to educate people, telling them to preserve their city and heritage. Officials said even though the campaigning is making a difference, a lot still needs to be done. Even trees, particularly those in the vicinity of protected sites, are not spared and many couples attempt to engrave their names within a carved out heart there.

SOURCE

14th February 2010, Times of India

HOPE PLACED ON CP RESTORATION, OLD-TIMERS RECALL GLORY DAYS

OVER 50 years ago in Connaught Place, Shiv Raj, then in his early twenties, would take a break from work at his father's shop to have lunch at The Embassy restaurant. A chicken dish with a naan and a dessert at the end of the meal besides a tip of four annas would cost him a total of Rs 5. Before fast-food chains, pubs and restaurants started crowding the Capital's landmark, there were only six eateries in Connaught Place -- Madras Coffee House, United Coffee House, The Embassy, Volga, Standard and Wengers. Now 72, Shiv Raj says of all the things he misses the most about 'those times' are the people. Seated behind his desk at Dev & Sons crockery shop, set up in 1949, Shiv Raj points towards parking lots filled to capacity, the hurried footsteps and the noisy construction work as part of the redevelopment project to draw a comparison with the decades gone by. Dressed in a suit to match the weather, Shiv Raj's eyes glaze when he remembers his erstwhile regular hangouts -- The Embassy during the day and Volga and Standard by the night "to break the monotony of running a crockery shop". The big transformation, he says, came with the population surge. "We could regularly visit restaurants because life in those days had a slow pace. A customer would show up every half an hour and during afternoons, several shopkeepers would even down shutters for lunch and a power nap at the Central Park. The park was, in fact, larger than its present avatar. It had rows of Asoka trees that were axed to make way for the Metro," he says. The real treats, however, were at Wengers. In 1965, the shop that introduced delectable British delights to the Indian masses had six flavours of cakes and pastries; they stand at around 30 at present. Charanjeet Singh, popularly known as Sardarji Manager, has been working at Wengers for the last 45 years. He says people from Chandni Chowk were the main visitors to the shop. The parking lot opposite the shop, Singh recalls, did not exist then and visitors had to climb up three steps to reach the path lining the shops. Pointing towards the shining cars lined outside the store, he says back in the Sixties there were only three car models --

the Ambassador, Fiat and the Landmark. "The parking lots in the Middle Circle were lined with iron benches and Victorian lamps. In the evenings, people would gather at the Central Park with their families," he recalls. As Connaught Place gears up for the biggest makeover since 1933, the veterans see it as a good move for their sagging business. "One should keep moving with the times. Things change and if the beauty of the place is being restored, it's a good thing," says Devisharan Vaish, who runs M Ram & Sons which offers customised tailoring. Construction work outside has made it difficult for customers to access the shop. Though business is down by 50 per cent, Vaish believes things will change once the work is over. "The New Delhi Municipal Council has said all construction work will be over in the next three months. Customers will start coming again after that," he says on an optimistic note.

WHAT HAS CHANGED The Rajiv Chowk Station is one of the most visible additions to the landmark Central Park was far bigger than what it is now and covered the Inner Circle road. Big Asoka trees would line it On Saturday evenings, the Delhi Police band would gather at the Central Park to play Against the big brands today, there were a variety of shops including grocery and electrical fittings In the Sixties, only three cars were seen -- Ambassador, Fiat and Landmark Two-way traffic was allowed **WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR** Façade restored to original beauty Signages and benches on lines of Victorian architecture along Inner Circle Better roads, drainage, sewerage and water supply Eight subways on Outer Circle A multi-level parking on BKS Marg (Opposite Hanuman Mandir) Plans on to make CP centrally airconditioned, hot and cold water supply to all shops.

SOURCE

[14th February 2010, Indian Express](#)

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