



INTACH

DELHI CHAPTER

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[RAILWAYS PRUNES PLAN FOR COMMERCIAL SPACE IN CP](#)

After Delhi Police, Delhi Development Authority (DDA) seems to be playing the spoilsport for Indian Railways. After being told that renovation work at the Minto Road Bridge could stall traffic in Connaught Place, the Railways have “agreed” to give up commercialization of over 1.5 lakh sqm of prime land in the area. “We are concerned that the project of upgrading the New Delhi station into a world-class facility will never take off until we agree to certain compromises. We are willing to accept some of DDA’s proposals to get this project off the shelf,” said a senior officer at Rail Bhawan. “The plan is being revised and a new one will be submitted to DDA soon,” a senior railway ministry official said, adding, “the land-owning agency has agreed in principle to approve the project on certain conditions.” Northern Railway sources claimed UTTIPEC — the nodal agency for government policy on traffic and transport — has been approached and a “formula” has been worked out. According to the revised plan, 50% of the area meant for commercial utilization on the Paharganj side will be reduced to get approval from DDA. According to the earlier plan, the Railways had earmarked 5.5 lakh sqm area for commercial utilization in the non-operational area. “It is expected to be reduced to about 4 lakh sqmt in the revised plan,” the official said. Sources at Northern Railway headquarters and railway ministry, however, expressed apprehensions about raising the money. “It is a PPP project in a prime location. UTTIPEC had asked us to reallocate the 1.5 lakh sqm space in other areas. But unless the process is commercially viable, we cannot expect a good response,” said a source. Though Railways had submitted their plan to DDA two years back, it did not get approval, resulting in cancellation of the tendering process for the Rs 12,000-crore New Delhi station project twice. DDA has objected to the massive commercial utilization plan on the ground that it would create a huge traffic bottleneck in the area. “We will begin the tendering process immediately after we get the DDA and Delhi Traffic Police nod,” added the official. However, the operational area, including circulating area, platforms and booking area, remain intact in the revised plan at 4.5 lakh sqm. There are plans for creating various facilities like shopping arcade, eateries and forex exchange booths in the non-operational areas at New Delhi Station. The Railways propose to develop 49 stations, including Howrah, Patna, Lucknow, Mumbai, Bangalore and Bhubaneswar as world class stations.

[SOURCE](#)

[4th March 2010, Times of India](#)

MAGIC AT MAYAPURI

A thriving water body with walkways and landscaped greens spread over 12-odd acres. The marshland wasting away along the busy Ring Road in the Mayapuri area is finally on a path that promises all this and more. For years, the wetlands had been neglected with the authorities turning a blind eye to them. But the irrigation & flood control department of the Delhi government has finally been assigned the task of resuscitating the water body and has submitted a Rs 4.5-crore conceptual plan to develop the water body alone. It took the intervention of the Delhi High Court to get the government to take stock of the wetland. Though the water body is one without any historical significance, it had emerged on the urban map as a fallout of infrastructure development and needs to be restored. The PWD had dug out soil from this patch of land during the construction of the first flyover at Naraina. Following that, this large ditch over the years grew into a wet area marked by marshy patches. With the matter reaching the Delhi High Court, the government — which was not even aware of the existence of the wetlands — was asked to take charge of the situation. According to sources, PWD and Delhi Tourism & Transportation Development Corporation refused to take the responsibility for developing the water body. And eventually, the irrigation and flood control department was entrusted with the task of restoration. On Thursday, the department made a presentation on the proposed revival and development plan before chief secretary Rakesh Mehta. Located off the busy Ring Road in Mayapuri area, the marshy lands and ditches that have deepened into rainwater pools will now be developed into a protected water body. The total area is spread over 16.527 acre of which 4.5 acre has been handed over to Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Corporation where the Common Effluent Treatment Plant is located. The remaining area — over 7.73 acre — is wet and marshy with stagnated sewage and rainwater. This is proposed to be developed as a water body. The revival and development of the water body, including its peripheral path, will cost Rs 4.5 crore. The water area is currently about 2-3m-deep. It is proposed to develop the water body by deepening, removing the wild growth and slush. Also, the water body will be recharged using treated effluent and waste water so that it can be developed into a clean lake. Slide slopes will be made and pebbles will be used to stabilize the flow. To develop the water body as a tourist attraction, small huts are proposed to be erected along the lake with benches on all the sides. The plan asserts on substantial lighting arrangements around the water body and a landscaping plan will be drawn up to green up the space with attractive plantation. For the plan to become a reality, the next step is the conceptual and financial approval by the government. After the approvals, PWD would have to hand over the land to irrigation and flood department after making it free of encroachment for execution of the plan, sources said.

SOURCE

6th March 2010, Times of India

MCD LETS LAKE BE THIRSTY

"There used to be so much water in the lake that elephants swam in it for hours," recalls Gyanchand Tiwari (41). Tiwari, a local priest, is talking about the more than nine acres of now-arid area, which was once known as Mandavali Lake in east Delhi's Mandavali Fazalpur. Mandavali Lake is one of the 629 water bodies identified by the Delhi High Court for revival after a writ petition by the NGO Tapas. The lake's history is linked inextricably with Delhi's. Sitting on a charpoy, Jairam Verma (69) fondly recalls the days when singharas (water chestnuts) would be grown in the big lake near his house. "But after the 1960s, haphazard growth meant the drains were emptied into the lake and the authorities also dumped debris," says Verma, whose family roots in the village go back to 250 years. Today the lake is dry. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) runs a primary school in one corner and a park covers large chunk. Though locals welcome the HC notice, they expressed doubts about implementation. Naveen Paul (38), a property dealer who lives near an intersection still called Talab (pond) Chowk, says, "Even if the lake is revived, will authorities ensure it remains unpolluted?" "It was a large lake, over 30,000 sq metres. There were also three smaller lakes," says Vinod Jain from Tapas. "The court order is very clear ...

irrespective of the size, these water bodies are supposed to be revived." The July 2009 report by the HC had appointed a three-member committee to monitor the work. The report about inspection carried out on June 3, 2009 said, "This water body had been transferred by DDA to MCD for development of a park and where a community hall had been proposed. This is totally illegal." MCD Director (Press and Information) Deep Mathur said, "Keeping in view the directions of the honourable Delhi High Court and its judicial body, it will not be desirable to construct community hall at the site and the matter is not being pursued." However, there was not a word about the "revival" of the water body. Even if the lake is revived, will the authorities ensure it remains unpolluted?

SOURCE

5th March 2010, Hindustan Times

NEW VISITORS IN LODHI GARDEN

There's more to Lodhi Garden than its well-mowed lawns and beautiful flowers now. The butterfly conservatory, opened in February on a three-acre demarcated land, is a new attraction for morning walkers, visitors, children and nature lovers. Lodhi Garden already has a Bonsai Park and is home to around 20 species of birds. But the recent addition has become a place to learn and educate oneself. At the entrance of the conservatory, the New Delhi Municipal Corporation has installed a board with pictures of butterflies found in the park and their names. The visitors are considering it a good initiative, as they already know the name of a butterfly when they spot one. It is a totally new experience for them. "A lot of people can recognize birds but identifying butterflies is difficult unless one has read about them," says Raghav Oberoi, a regular jogger at the park. The Bonsai Park was set up in the garden in the late 1970s and has a wide variety of bonsais. The garden offers a treat for botanists and people fond of gardening. It has trees such as chir, neem, deodar, palm tree and eucalyptus. There is a separate rose garden with 200 varieties of roses. Even for school students, Lodhi Garden is a place full of things to learn, starting from history to flora and fauna. Due to the artificial water bodies spread in the gardens, many birds such as babblers, parakeets, kingfishers, parrots and eagles can commonly be seen. And now, due to the presence of the butterfly conservatory, more birds can be spotted here chirping and flying from one tree to another. Lodhi Garden is a complete package in itself. The butterfly conservatory has been formed to generate concern for environment sustainability among the residents of Delhi. Butterflies are sensitive to change in the habitat and climate. They are good indicators of the health of a natural habitat. The metamorphosis and life cycle of butterflies too can provide education in nature conservation? The conservatory has been landscaped in a manner that visitors can view the butterflies from the 'viewing gallery'.

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE The garden has the tombs of Muhammad Shah and Sikander Lodi Nawab Bahadur constructed the Athpula Bridge here. It rests on eight piers.

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATORY It is on three acres. It is an open habitat. It is an insecticide free zone. There are dense shrubs, flowering plants and a lotus water body. The world's smallest butterfly, grass jewel is found here. There are common leopard, peacock fancy, striped tiger, small orange tip, lime butterfly and yellow pansy.

SOURCE

4th March 2010, Hindustan Times

CAMPUS RUCKUS CLOUD OVER UN HERITAGE STATUS

The process of turning the Tagore heritage complex in Visva-Bharati University into a World Heritage site may have been hit by students' vandalism. Two groups of students clashed in the university campus in Birbhum district, 200 km from Kolkata, on Saturday night and vandalised part of an artwork by painter Nandalal Bose and sculptor Ramkinkar Baij. The relief work was done in the 1930s on the walls of Kalo Bari (Black House) that is currently used as a boys' hostel. The building is made of mud with a thick coat of coal tar, to which it owes its name.

The Centre applied for the world heritage status in February 2010, following the Unesco's decision to celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore in 2011 all over the world to spread his message of peace and harmony. But now, the Unesco may reject the application on the ground that the authorities have failed to properly protect the site. In March 2004, burglars took away Tagore's Nobel medallion and other memorabilia. The case is still unsolved. "Unfortunately, the apprehension can't be ruled out. If students and those associated with the violence don't realize the fallout of a skirmish on a heritage campus, shame can descend on the entire nation," said Uday Narayan Singh, director, Rabindra Bhavana. Although Visva-Bharati vice- chancellor Rajat Kanta Roy ordered a probe into the violence, the state government has not yet taken any step, since the university authorities did not file any first information report with the police. Refusing to comment on the fate of the Unesco application, Gautam Sengupta, director, Archaeological Survey of India, said, "The incident is extremely unfortunate."

SOURCE

3rd March 2010, Hindustan Times

ASI SUFI FEST FINDS WAY INTO CITY'S CULTURAL CALENDAR

Last week, director-designer- writer Muzaffar Ali wowed the Delhi audience with his brainchild, Jahan-e-Khusrau — a three-day festival to commemorate the death anniversary of Sufi saint Hazrat Amir Khusrau. Now, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), in collaboration with Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Central Public Works Department and the MCD brings its first ever heritage festival — Jashn-e-Khusrau — as part of the Urban Renewal Programme undertaken by ASI and the Trust. The festival, starting on Thursday, will be set against the resplendent backdrop of Chaunsath Khamba lo- and the lawns of the Humayun's Tomb -- incidentally, this is where Khusrau started the quwwali music tradition in the 13th Century. "Monuments are not just tourist destinations. The concerts to be held at heritage sites will have arrangements for almost 2,000 people. I am sure it is going to be an invaluable addition to the city's cultural calendar," ASI Superintending Archaeologist (Delhi) K K Muhammed said. The festival has invited six groups of Khanqahi quwwals, of which two are from Pakistan. Farid Ayaz, Abu Muhammad and their group from Karachi will perform the repertoire of Khusrau's qalaam on March 10. Khanqahi quwwals from Uttar Pradesh and Delhi will also participate in the festival. "Khanqahs were hospices for Sufi travelers. The quwwals would then sing in these dargahs. The art form is almost dead now as Khanqahi quwwals are not concert artistes in India. If this art form can be revived through this festival, it will prove a big achievement as they do not have any source of livelihood," says Irfan Zuberi, consultant with Aga Khan Trust for Culture. The festival opens with a poetry recital by Syed Shahid Mahdi at the India International Centre. Heritage walks will also be held on March 7, 11 and 12, concluding near the tomb. There will be discussions on the contribution of Amir Khusrau to the Qawwali tradition on March 6. Two films — Sufi Music-The Mystic Music of Islam narrated by acclaimed writer William Dalrymple and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan-A Voice from Heaven, directed by Giuseppe Asaro — will be screened at the IIC foyer on March 12. The Agha Khan Trust cites the development of the Nizamuddin Basti and the heritage monuments located in the area as a big reason for organizing the festival. "This festival is an effort to integrate conservation, socioeconomic and cultural development," said Ritish Nandy, Project Director with the Aga Khan Trust. Entry to all events is free.

SOURCE

4th March 2010, Indian Express

HUMAYUN'S TOMB IS 'MOST TOURIST- FRIENDLY MONUMENT'

FOR years, Humayun's Tomb underwent restoration and conservation work and now the results are for all to see. Overcoming tough competition from Red Fort and Qutub Minar, the monument, signifying a wife's love for her husband, won the award for the "Best Maintained Tourist-Friendly Monument" for 2008-2009, organized by the Ministry of Tourism. The prize, which was shared with Bhima Devi Temple in Pinjore, Harviana

did not come as a surprise to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) officials, who received the award at a function on Wednesday. Superintending Archaeologist of ASI (Delhi) KK Muhammed said, "The monument had a huge potential to be developed into a heritage zone and we have been able to do so in collaboration with Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC)," he said. The monument is now set to become bigger and better soon with the ASI having acquired the surrounding land. After a 12-year battle between the ASI and the Delhi State Bharat Scouts and Guides (BSG) over an 11-acre plot next to Humayun's Tomb the Ministry of Urban Development handed over the land to the heritage body in January. The plot houses two Centrally-protected monuments — Bada Batashewala Mahal and Chota-batashewala Mahal. It took ASI and AGCT around three years from 2000 to 2003 to restore the monument. The team planted trees all over the place and around 12 hectares of lawns were replanted. They reinstated the walkways and reactivated water channels. After the conservation work, water began to flow through the water-courses and dried up fountains started functioning. The monument, said Muhammed, is very popular with foreign tourists and there are plans to develop the surrounding area. The restoration work was done under the aegis of the National Culture Fund. According to the AKTC website, "the objective of the project as to revitalize the gardens, path ways, fountains and water channels of the chahâr-bâgh, the four art paradise garden surrounding Humayun's Tomb in Delhi."

SOURCE

5th March 2010, Indian Express

MAKEOVER COMPLETE FOR YUSUF ZAI MARKET

FAMOUS for its eating joints like the Kake Da Hotel and Hyderabad Biryani House, the Yusuf Zai Market on Connaught Place Outer Circle is ready to unveil its new look. The sheet covering the newly tiled buildings started being unwrapped on Wednesday, revealing the new, shiny exterior. Post-renovation, uniform signages have replaced the haphazardly placed ones, and pillars have been given a fresh coat of plaster. The biggest change is seen on the building's front leveled and aligned, with a smooth finish. 'Jaalis' have been carved on the top floor for ventilation, and glass panes have replaced the wooden windows. "It took a year to finish the project and it has been satisfactory," H S Moti, the president of Connaught Circus Municipal Market Association, said. Work on the project began in December 2007. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and the shopkeepers have shared the expenses — each shop pitched in with Rs 30,000 for the renovation. The market has 102 shops. The Yusuf Zai is one of the nine small markets being restored by the NDMC ahead of the Commonwealth Games. The others are: Shankar Market, Basurkar Market, Begum Zaidi Market, Netaji Nagar Market, Nauroji Nagar Market, Lodhi Road Market, Kidwai Nagar Market (South and Central), and Laxmi Bai Market. All these markets are more than 50 years old, and have been neglected for long. After renovation, while interiors of the shops will remain untouched, the façade will be revamped by using uniform tiles on the walls and repairing the pillars, wherever present. The renovation will be on the lines of the Janpath Market and Momo Market in Yashwant Singh Place that were the first markets in NDMC area to be revamped. "The Yusuf Zai Market will be inaugurated on Monday but work on the footpaths still remains. That and the underground laying of electrical wires will be undertaken after the inauguration," an NDMC official said.

SOURCE

8th March 2010, Indian Express

THEATRE DIRECTOR TO STAGE SHOWS AT RED FORT, QULI KHAN TOMB

THE Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) has roped in renowned theatre director Aamir Raza Husain to stage shows at Red Fort and Quli Khan Tomb in Mehrauli during the Commonwealth Games. As part of the cultural programmes to be held during the Games, light-and-sound shows will be organized at Red Fort, Old Fort and Quli Khan Tomb, said ITDC Director Rajiv Makin. Husain has been assigned the responsibility for the Red Fort and Mehrauli shows, while a film company has bagged the contract for the

Titled Dasatan-e-Dilli, the 45- minute Mehrauli show will be about the story of the city of Delhi. "This is the first time such a show is being held at the Mehrauli Fort," Makin said. While the Old Fort show is about the six cities of Delhi, the Red Fort show will begin from the Shahjahanabad days to the Mughal era. It will take viewers through the freedom struggle and culminate at Independence. "The light-and-sound shows at the Red Fort were conceived al- most 20 years ago, but technology has changed a lot since then. We will use the latest laser technology and the presentation will be entirely different," said Makin. The Tourism ministry is planning more such cultural evenings during the Games and will launch a massive publicity campaign to woo tourists during the mega sports event in the Capital. "We are participating in the ITB Berlin Travel and Tourism Fair to showcase the Commonwealth Games and have rented 870 square feet of area at the fair for setting up a pavillion. It will be themed on be the Commonwealth Games," a ministry official said.

SOURCE

8th March 2010, Indian Express

TO PREVENT SEEPAGE, GOVT MULLS PLASTIC LINING FOR NARAIN LAKE

MONTHS after the High Court called for the revival of water bodies based on public interest litigation (PIL), the Delhi government in a meeting on Thurs- day approved a Rs 5- crore plan for restoring a 7.7-acre water body in Naraina. For this project, the government is also contemplating a first-of-its-kind measure: layering the now-defunct water body with a plastic-cellulose layer to avoid seepage. Pegged as an 'environment friendly' solution, a private company has proposed to the Delhi government to line the layers and the bottom of the water body so that the water stays in. Officials, however, are divided over the use of a plastic component, especially as the High Court has said restoration should be by natural means. The government is, mean- while, also speculating the idea of layering just the sides of the water body. Officials said the depth of the water body, which is presently filled with sewage, will be in- creased from existing 2 metres to 3 metres. The Flood and Irrigation department decided during the Thursday meeting that the lake will be refilled with treated water from an effluent treatment plant after the depth has been increased. The final plan is to create a tourist complex in the area complete with a jogging track and water treatment facilities, with the help of the Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation. The High Court had earlier ordered for a committee to be set up for restoring water bodies with Chief Secretary Rakesh Mehta at the helm. "We are debating lining the lake with a plastic coat as pro- posed by DuPont. We are in discussions with the Flood and Irrigation department and hope to take a decision soon. Lining the entire body—walls and bottom — may not be wise, we may settle for only lining the sides," Mehta told Newline. "This is also to stabilize the slopes of the water body, and this experiment has been tried in South India," he said. According to the Chief Secretary, the water body will be fully restored in six months. "We will also create walking and jogging tracks along the water body so it can be a tourist spot." Another plan of developing a baraat ghar with a parking area, to be constructed by Municipal Corporation of Delhi at a cost of around Rs 4.7 crore, was also mooted during the meeting. With pressure on restoration of the lake, this plan has temporarily been shelved, officials said.

SOURCE

8th March 2010, Indian Express

THE ABIDING SAGA OF THE FATHEHPURI CHRUCH

St Stephen's Church, which won the DDA Urban Heritage Award, was built in 1867 at Fatehpuri during the vicarship of the Rev Robert Winter, who was associated with the Angalican Church in Delhi for over 30 years. His wife, Priscilla, founded schools for girls and women. In this connection it is worth nothing that the winters were responsible for many of the institutions in Delhi, mostly named after St Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Not much is known about the existence of churches in Delhi during the medieval period, though the Armenians are supposed to have had one. That was because the Mughal court was at Agra and it was in that city that the first North Indian Church was built during the

history of St. Stephen's Church, 120 Jesuits in the city. During the period 1648-1686 their number rose to 240. But the decline began towards the closing years of Aurangzeb's reign. By 1857, however, a church with a thatched roof existed in the walled city under the charge of Fr. Zacharias. But when the revolt broke out the church was among the building attacked and Fr Zacharias lost his life while trying to save it. Seven years later a regular church was built on the site in 1865 by the Capuchins.

SOURCE

4th March 2010, Statesman

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

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