



८७७ | ६५

DELHI CHAPTER

Weekly News Clippings – 161  
22<sup>nd</sup> June- 28<sup>th</sup> June

## Editor's Note

*Rush gives Qutub hope of drawing more visitors now*

*Historical love!*

*Old city to be revamped only after Games*

*Mosque makeover annoys locals*

## RUSH GIVES QUTUB HOPE OF DRAWING MORE VISITORS NOW

While Qutub Minar is already the most visited monument in the capital, the opening of the new Gurgaon Metro line brings more hope to the 14th century world heritage site in terms of visitors. Footfalls at Qutub Minar and adjoining monuments are likely to see a sharp rise with the sites having become more accessible to the public now. Eager to promote their sites to get more visitors, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is hopeful that Qutub Minar will now see visitors, who have previously chosen to not travel such a long distance. The nearest Metro station to Qutub complex is just a mile away. So, the Metro is the easiest way to get to the monument. At present, up to 10,000 people come to Qutub Minar daily. The number almost doubles on weekends. And with the new Metro connectivity to the main city, these numbers are likely to increase further. Though Qutub Minar has adequate parking space for private vehicles and tourist buses, officials say that they expect more people to take the Metro to reach the monument. “But we have to be more careful. With increased footfalls, stepping up security measures also becomes important,” said an ASI official. A large percentage of people who come to the Qutub complex are foreigners. Altogether, the site registers more visitors than the other two world heritage sites in the city — Humayun’s Tomb and Red Fort. Lately, however, footfalls in Red Fort have also witnessed an increase. Heritage experts point out that Qutub Minar has the advantage of better connectivity and parking space for visitors, something that Mughal ruler Shah Jahan’s citadel is yet to offer.

**SOURCE**

**22nd June 2010, Times of India**

## HISTORICAL LOVE!

If you love history and want to contribute in its preservation, then you can check out the courses run at the National Archives of India, New Delhi. NAI’s short-term courses are in records or archives management, reprography, care and conservation of books and others. The only full-fledged one-year programme is a postgraduate diploma in archives and records management. The programme was earlier open only to MAs in history but now, a few non-humanities students are also entering this domain. “The trend has been seen in the last few years when even science graduates apply to study here,” says Rajesh Verma, assistant director, National Archives.

Practical knowledge is the main thrust of the course. Students are trained to do the preservation and management of records. They work in laboratories and libraries where they observe, experience and perform the conservation work at a colossal archival centre, which has 1.75 lakh books and hundreds of thousands of maps and manuscripts. On entering the main building of NAI, one can see the staff laminating several-centuries-old records. The smaller documents are preserved by hand-lamination while larger ones are passed through a machine where they are heated so that blotting paper sticks to both sides. Apart from these old methods, students are also taught about preserving archives through micro-film. During the programme, students are also taken to the regional office in Bhopal, a repository of microfilms of archives stored at the headquarters in Delhi, and to record centres at Jaipur, Puducherry and Bhubaneswar. "Such tours are very useful for two reasons. In Puducherry, we saw quite a few French records and we observed their heritage, history and records and also preservation techniques practised by the archivists at that centre," says Manish Tiwari, a student and a civil services aspirant. There are around 10 sponsored students while others are "private" candidates, as they are called. Most of them have read modern Indian history. A few have diverse backgrounds. Sarath Pillai, an IAS aspirant, is a humanities graduate while Tiwari is a dentist by training. "I want to sit for the civil services exam and after BDS (Bachelor of Dental Surgery), I studied for an MA in history and got interested in history and related subjects. This might help me in my preparation for the civil services," says Tiwari. Talking about the need to make archival studies popular, Pillai said, "There is a lack of consciousness for archives. Most of us have a background in history, but we never read about archives in the course curriculum. This course imparts that important knowledge of archives." There is Parmila (who uses only her first name), a student with a library background while another student, A Ahmed, has studied museology (museum studies). "The ways and techniques to manage library and archives are quite similar. The only difference lies in the fact that archives are the primary source of knowledge while library books are the secondary," says Parmila. To pursue archival studies, what better place could one get than NAI, "a temple of records" as Pillai calls it. He was awed by 40 km of linear space occupied by 40,00,000 records stored and preserved at NAI, one of the oldest buildings in Lutyens' Delhi. Before completing the programme, students have to submit a dissertation on a chosen subject related to archives. Dilimaliya Nage, a candidate from Sri Lanka's Department of National Archives, is working on 'Lanka-India relationships' while Tiwari's subject is 'Urbanisation in Delhi'. Though the subjects don't necessarily talk about archives, they certainly touch upon history. History needs to be preserved, lest it starts fading from our memories. That's what these students learn to do.

#### **SOURCE**

**23rd June 2010, Hindustan Times**

#### **OLD CITY TO BE REVAMPED ONLY AFTER GAMES**

Even as the rest of the city gets a facelift ahead of the Commonwealth Games, the Walled City — that sees a large number of tourists — will continue to exist in a state of neglect. After over six years of planning for the redevelopment of the area, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) now claims that it will only be able to reconstruct the central verge in Chandni Chowk before the Games. Said MCD commissioner K S Mehra: "Getting the requisite approval from various agencies takes time and therefore we will only be able to reconstruct the central verge before the Games. The rest of the redevelopment of Chandni Chowk will be taken up after the Games." Traders in the area now claim that they will not let the civic agency carry out work on even the central verge. Said general secretary of Chandni Chowk traders' association, Sanjay Bharghav: "For more than six years we have been hearing about their redevelopment plans for the area. However, no work has been done on ground. We are now tired of this and will not allow MCD to carry out any work here. This will just be a waste of money. Chandni Chowk is a major tourist destination and the government agencies should have given priority to the area. Instead, the main road of Chandni Chowk has been dug up everywhere — for deep sewage work being carried out by Delhi Jal Board (DJB). The pavements, too, are crumbling and there is utter traffic chaos in the area."

At present, the main road from Red Fort to Fatehpuri remains heavily encroached by vendors, and illegal parking of vehicles makes it impossible to walk around the area. Said a trader: “Lakhs of tourists are expected to visit Chandni Chowk during the Games and it will be a matter of shame for us to showcase the Old City as it exists today. There is no space to walk in the area due to heavy encroachment, the overhead wires continue to be an eyesore and there is no proper parking area or even basic amenities available here.” The original ambitious redevelopment plan — floated by MCD around six years back — included relaying of the main Chandni Chowk road along with other roads in the Walled City, carrying out ducting of service lines, relaying of pavements in the area, putting up new streetlights, carrying out facade improvement, among other works. MCD had also proposed to start a tram service in the area. The total cost of the plan was estimated to vary between Rs 40 crore and Rs 50 crore. According to senior MCD officials, however, delays in getting the funds from Delhi government for this project also led to problems and delayed the work in Chandni Chowk. Said Abhimanyu Dalal, consultant for the project: “We had a meeting with senior officials of MCD in the beginning of June. We were told that work on improving the footpaths and installing streetlights in the area could be started soon — as part of phase-I, which was supposed to be undertaken before the Games. However, we haven’t heard from them since then.” Said Bharghav: “In a letter by chief minister Sheila Dikshit, we were assured that phase-I of this project would be completed before the Games. But none of the promises made to us has been kept.”

#### **SOURCE**

**28th June 2010, Times of India**

#### **MOSQUE MAKEOVER ANNOYS LOCALS**

Conservation work on a Lodi-period monument in south Delhi’s Gulmohar Park has not gone down well with a number of local residents who feel that the structure no longer looks “aesthetically appealing”. The monument, Darwesh Shah ki Masjid, has been given a makeover by Intach’s Delhi chapter for the Commonwealth Games over the past several weeks and has recently been notified by the state archaeology department. Before the structure was taken up for conservation, most parts of the mosque were partially hidden behind trees and wild vegetation. Officials said the stone masonry around the arches was damaged and one corner of the mosque was missing. The upper platform in that portion had caved in, allowing big trees to take root. “People get used to seeing historical monuments in a shambles and appreciate them without realising that if they continue to stay that way, they will be reduced to a pile of stones,” said a heritage conservationist. But when Darwesh Shah ki Masjid was taken up for conservation, residents who lived nearby and frequently visited the site during their morning walks were unhappy with what they saw. Artist Arpana Caur who lives nearby said: “The mosque has been painted white which does not match the original colour. I was horrified to see this 600-year-old monument being turned into something ugly in the name of modernisation.” Architect Gautam Bhatia, who wrote to the state archaeology department in this regard and lives opposite the mosque, said though residents appreciated the attempt being made to restore Darwesh Shah to its past glory, they were critical about the manner in which it was being done. “In the name of makeover, the conservationists are changing the mosque’s facade”. Heritage conservationists, however, said conservation of ancient buildings was something people won’t understand easily. “Plaster acts as a protective coating on ancient structures and if done properly, oxidation will take place and patina will form within a few seasons of rain ,” said conservationist Ratish Nanda. Another conservationist said: “People usually only see aesthetics when they talk about ancient monuments and how it was originally. But what most people don’t understand is that the plaster is not just for decoration but also meant to protect a structure.

What is being perceived as white paint on the mosque is lime plaster (chuna).” Intach’s Delhi Chapter said they had conducted extensive historical research through records available with Zafar Hasan before starting conservation work here. “In the past, there have been several attempts to encroach upon this monument. Surprisingly, the residents here never protested. During conservation of the mosque, new portions were re-built based on existing evidence. They have being re-plastered and given a finishing coat to match the existing colour. No paint or white wash has been used insensitively,” said a senior Intach official. Officials said the fresh layer of plaster may look new and shiny now, but in due course of time, it will undergoing carbonation and blend in with the rest of the monument.

**SOURCE**

**28th June 2010, Times of India**

**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](mailto:feedback@intachdelhichapter.org)**