



INTACH

DELHI CHAPTER

Weekly News Clippings – 162
29th June- 5th July

Editor's Note

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HOP ON HOP OFF BUS SERVICE IN CITY FROM SEPT

Come September and Delhi will have its very first hop-on-hop-off tourist bus service connecting many of its heritage spots. However, it will not be a double-decker bus as planned before. Delhi Chief Secretary Rakesh Mehta said the service will be initially launched with around 20 low-floor air-conditioned buses. "The service will help tourists roam around the city and will ply on selected routes divided in three sectors. The routes will be based on access to monuments, markets and eateries," Mehta said, adding the buses will be run by the Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC). The bus service will be available at regular intervals from different spots across the city and tourists will be able to take the bus at any of these spots after buying consolidated tickets priced between Rs 300 and Rs 400. INTACH has already charted out routes connecting major tourist attractions like the Qutab Minar, Mehrauli and Shahjahanabad. While TVS has been roped in to supply the buses, the government will start an open-roof tourist service only after the Commonwealth Games.

SOURCE

29th June 2010, Indian Express

ART YOU CAN OWN

Art is no longer an exclusive domain of the connoisseurs. Galleries are increasingly engaging with the masses and a range of art works — from paintings, sculptures, posters to even greeting cards and bookmarks — are now accessible to the public, sans the breathtaking prices. National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) — that has a collection of over 16,000 works of art — has a souvenir shop where you can buy prints of legendary paintings by Tagore, Ravi Verma, Amrita Shergill, M F Husain and many other renowned artists starting Rs 50 only. "I am not a professional artist, but I love collecting famous paintings. This place feels like a dream to people like me, who could never have thought of owning a painting by Husain. This is a steal, really," said an excited Randip Kaur, who came with her family to visit the gallery all the way from Amritsar. "As a national repository, we constantly aim to bring the public close to the history of art. Our aim is to preserve, showcase, and ultimately share the creations our country has acquired. And what better way than to let people take a piece by the artists they admire. These memorabilia enable collectors to stay in constant touch with their favourite work and brew upon its content," explained Rajeev Lochan, director, NGMA. The gallery is trying to develop a niche market by offering a variety of memorabilia —

from prints, portfolios and greeting cards to posters and paper-weights. Arts I — an initiative of Religare — is among the many private ventures that aim at the convergence of art with entertainment, information, and meaningful interaction. “Not everybody can buy expensive paintings and designer products. So, our constant effort is to take designer works to every person who wants these,” says Mukesh Panika, director, Arts I. The gallery has a shop that offers everything from bookmarks to colourful steel boxes — ranging from Rs 50 to as much as Rs 10,000. “These pieces are not for sale elsewhere. This personal touch makes the art works more special,” added Panika. Besides a cafe and resource centre, the gallery offers appreciators as well as curious visitors an opportunity to catch up with painters while they work on their creations. Such initiatives seem to be serving as catalysts for the larger process of democratization of art. Anila Gill, an art enthusiast who teaches French at Jamia, said: “Indians have a history of engagement with drawings. And it is strange that art has still not mainstreamed into our daily chores. There is a lot of potential in the Indian market. In France, people put in both time and money on exhibitions. With initiatives such as these, more people in India will learn to look at art as a part and parcel of their lives.” Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (Intach) also has an attractive retail booth where interesting craft works from across the country are put up for sale. “We conduct skill-enhancing workshops for craftsmen across India and sell the products created at such workshops. This serves a dual purpose — of removing intermediaries between craftsmen and customers as well as showcasing their works on a larger platform,” said Anil Browne, project consultant, Intach. “I particularly love the Chhilai painting by Madhya Pradesh artists. For children, there are interesting painting kits to make beautiful Rajasthani paintings. My daughter has developed a keen interest in art and craft, thanks to these,” said Bhaveta Vaishnav at the shop in Intach. Visitors have also been flocking to National Museum, a hub of Indian art and sculptures, for buying replicas of their favourite antique pieces. And the prices sound unreal. “I bought a replica of a Buddha statue for Rs 2,000. I have seen the original sculpture and can’t point out the difference between the two,” said Aparna Bhargav, who bought gifts for friends within a fraction of her budget. Art shops are here to stay as the love for artistic creations seems to proliferate amongst the masses. The dream of ‘art for all’ may be realized sooner than expected.

SOURCE

29th June 2010, Times of India

DOMES REVEALS DESIGNS

While conservation and upkeep of popular heritage structures in the city — such as Qutub Minar & Red Fort — has always been prioritized, hundreds of other, much smaller, monuments often lay neglected. Significantly, ongoing conservation of some of these little-known monuments has started yielding new findings. Gol Gumbad — a Lodi-period monument in central Delhi — is a case in point. Located on Lodi Road, one of the capital’s arterial roads, it is bound to attract tourists, specially with the Commonwealth Games drawing closer. The monument figures in the list of 92 structures adopted by the state archaeology department for notification. During the conservation of Gol Gumbad, officials stumbled upon intricate Islamic designs and patterns on its interior walls. Now, this 14th century structure is all set to get a massive facelift — which will include landscaping and illumination. The conservation work — by Intach Delhi Chapter — has been on for many weeks. “Since the building was never a centrally-protected structure it’s condition went from bad to worse over the years. There was a only a grill around the building to prevent vandalism. But no repair work had ever taken place here,” said a senior Intach official. Traces of a blue pattern were discovered on the ceiling of the dome during repair work in the monument’s interiors. “We never realized there were paintings inside. Once traces began to emerge, we used chemical treatment to clean the ceiling and found a large floral pattern in blue. It was given a few touches at places where the original paint had peeled off. But fortunately, the painting was overall in a good condition,” said an official.

A small drawing of a warrior on the horseback, along with a few sketches, was also unearthed while the walls of the monument were being cleaned.

“The drawing was located in the upper half of a side wall. It’s small — no bigger than 12 inches. Some other small random sketches were also discovered along with this painting,” said officials. Traditionally, Islamic period monuments generally have floral or geometric design patterns. Historians say that these can vary according to the monument’s significance, period and size. Interestingly, Gol Gumbad also has ararish plaster work inside. While this is not unusually found in Delhi, it’s common in Rajasthan where monuments are much more decorative. “There is very little information available on the Gol Gumbad and we are looking at archival research to find out who built the monument. The idea is to open it to the public so they can have a glimpse of these intricate Islamic patterns,” said an official. The building has been rated B in terms of archaeological value by Intach Delhi Chapter.

SOURCE

30th June 2010, Times of India

MAKING & MARKETING OF BRAND DELHI

100,000 Tourists expected to visit Delhi in October 2010 174 The number of heritage monuments protected by ASI 46 The number of ASI monuments that are being spruced up before the Games begin 13 The number of ASI-protected monuments that will be illuminated before the Commonwealth Games 96,000 Expected availability of rooms including Bed & Breakfast scheme 3,500 Average rate (in Rs) at which rooms are available under the B&B scheme : Ask a foreigner who has visited Delhi about what is there to see in India's Capital city and all you'll get is a blank. This is because for years and years, Delhi has been just a transit point for foreign tourists who are headed to other, more enticing destinations. The domestic traveller, meanwhile, hardly spends a day or two in the Capital and then moves on to some other location. But all this is going to change. 'Junction city' is soon going to be upgraded to a 'destination'. And bringing this about is the official motto of the Commonwealth Games--“Welcome to the historic city of Delhi“. With 174 Centrally-protected heritage monuments and many other smaller monuments, dozens of museums, traditional showcases like Chandni Chowk offering an ethnic shopping and food experience and a number of architecturally magnificent religious places, Delhi is emerging as a standalone, onestop tourist destination. Slowly, yet steadily, the number of visitors is increasing. As many as 19.3 lakh foreign tourists came to Delhi last year. For the Commonwealth Games alone, authorities expect at least 1 lakh tourists to turn up. And this increase in tourists is expected to have a direct impact on the city's commerce. “As it is, Chandni Chowk is a popular hub. During the Games, the number is bound to increase. This will directly help the traditional artisans and craftsman in the Walled City,” said Mansoor Hasan Siddiqui, general secretary of Shahjahani Dilli RWA. TOURIST DESTINATION During a mega-sporting event like the Commonwealth Games, tourists always benefits the host city. More than a year after the Athens Olympics Games 2004, Games' chief organizer Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki confessed that Greece was still reaping the event's benefits. Greece saw a jump of 15 per cent in tourism and Athens 20 per cent increase in tourists, she claimed adding, “Employment kept rising partly due to the jump in tourism.“ Back home in Delhi, the tourism industry already has its plans chalked out. Vijay Thakur, president of Indian Association of Tour Operators, says, “We are planning not just tours around Delhi but also heritage walks in Delhi.“ From India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) to Delhi Tourism and small-time hotel operators, every single agency is busy getting rooms ready for the tourists. While ITDC is trying for a capacity addition of 5,000 three-star rooms apart from its three big-draw hotels, the Delhi government is augmenting this with a Bed & Breakfast service. “It's for the first time that efforts are being made to cater to basic issues like meeting of shortage of hotel rooms. Nearly 1,300 rooms are already available under the Bed & Breakfast scheme. We are expecting more,” Delhi Travel and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC) Managing Director Rina Ray said. MARKETING DELHI Brand Delhi is what is being marketed. And Delhiites are expected to participate in this

completely. “We plan to go in for a big advertising campaign from September asking the Delhiites to participate actively in the Games. At the same time, the campaign will be aimed at attracting not just international and domestic tourists but also Delhiites themselves,” Ray said. Earlier last week, Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, too, had taken a similar stand. “Our city is already a green city; we can now make it a clean city. No amount of planning without the people's participation can succeed.” The authorities are confident. As Ray put it, “We need to roll it out and iron out all the problems by the end of the September.”

TOMORROW As Delhi's public transportation system, from buses and taxis to flyovers, changes we look at Delhi's new wheels and roads. How can one not showcase what is one's USP? Keeping just this in mind, the ASI is sprucing up 46 monuments. “The three World Heritage Sites -the Qutub Minar, Humayun's Tomb and the Red Fort -already attract a large number of visitors and, now, with the Games around the corner, the lesser known but equally important and beautiful monuments are being spruced up too,” said ASI spokesperson Dr B.R. Mani. The ASI also is also setting up new signage's at the six most important monuments, public utilities and cafeterias. ITDC is going ahead with illumination for night viewing at 13 ASI-protected monuments. The ITDC is also planning to revamp the light-and-sound show at the Red Fort and introduce a new one at the Purana Qila on the 'History of Delhi'.

VOLUNTEER, DELHI, VOLUNTEER Nobody can debate that the kind of overhauling that the capital is undergoing needs a lot of effort. It is a Herculean task to tame the tempers and habits of Delhiites and the authorities are ensuring that people, the Capital's residents, become an integral part of the movement. A most 'tried-and-tested' way for this is to take the help of volunteers. The names of as many as 14,000 volunteers have already been forwarded by the DTTDC for training organized by the Organizing Committee with Amity. “Apart from this, there will be 'role specific' training from August for around 3,500 volunteers,” said DTTDC Managing Director Rina Ray. The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), too, is chipping in. “We will deploy 150 volunteers who will man the Information Kiosks provided by Delhi government at the airport, railway stations and other such public places,” said Vijay Thakur, IATO president.

HTC CULTURAL EVENTS Cultural Evening at the Ashok will be held every day during Games Cultural events will be held every evening during Games at Dilli Haats opposite INA Market and Pitampura that are being spruced up City sightseeing tour is being revamped totally Tourists Help Line is reworked and revamped 'History of Delhi' a new Light and Sound show at Purana Qila Light and Sound show at Red Fort to be upgraded **IF YOU WANT TO KNOW DELHI, TAKE A WALK** With more than 1,200 heritage monuments in the city including 174 protected by the ASI there are plenty of sites to walk and see. A few of the routes that are popular with those conducting Heritage Walks are: In and around Ballimaran streets where Mirza Ghalib, the famous Urdu poet lived Exploring the splendour and glory of Shahjahanabad Chandni Chowk, Seetaram Bazar, old havelis, not to mention food of Delhi The sites related to the 1857 Mutiny in north Delhi, Kashmere Gate and Civil Lines Mehrauli Archaeological Park comprising more than 65 heritage structures Baolis (step wells) and Baghs (royal gardens) of Delhi Nizammudin

OTHER WALKS Delhi chapter of the Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) regularly organizes Heritage Walks. Organized on Sunday mornings, anybody can participate in the walks by paying a small fee. Those interested can register themselves at walks@intachdelhichapter.org or contact INTACH Delhi chapter at 011-24632267, 24632269 or 24631818.

SOURCE

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

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