

Layer by layer, haveli becomes home

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New Delhi: Now being refurbished, Seth Ram Lal Khemka Haveli was listed as a Grade-II heritage building by Delhi government in 2010. That made it mandatory that the original contours cannot be altered. The same year, the Archaeological Survey of India made it a rule that prior permission was mandatory for any work within 300 metres of a protected monument. The haveli was 292 metres from Kashmere Gate.

"There were no maps of the building. So we studied and mapped the entire place and took permission from both ASI and Heritage Conservation Committee of Delhi government. All clearances took about a year to come and we began our work in November 2013 only," Tipnis said.

The idea was to provide all modern amenities like air conditioners, modular kitchens and western-style toilets without altering the heritage look and feel of the building. But it wasn't easy to find construction workers trained in heritage conservation.

"We visited different heritage sites where conservation work has been on and learnt from the teams there to conserve heritage. We then trained our own team of labourers," Tipnis said.

Training was only the first part of the challenge; there were many other wrongs in the haveli that had to be made right. "We scraped off the different layers of cement plaster. There was water seepage on the walls, cracks and swelling on the floor. When we excavated the ground floor, we found both modular bricks used during the Raj as well as lakshori and nanakshahi bricks used in Mughal times. We put back the original lime mortar used in all buildings of the time. That made a difference immediately: we've



NEW LEASE OF LIFE: The haveli is being restored to its earlier grandeur but will have all the modern comforts, as envisioned by architect Aishwarya Tipnis and owner Devki Nandan Bagla

ki Nandan Bagla, the owner.

But despite all this, the total expenditure incurred actually belies the magnitude of the work. "It has cost us Rs 50 lakh to restore the ground and mezzanine floors as well as the facade. For those who can spend, this isn't a lot of money. Yet if the Baglas had followed what many others in the Walled City have done—selling off their ancestral properties and buying flats or kothis elsewhere—they would have missed out on the opportunity

to set an example for others to emulate. There are still hundreds of havelis here that are pretty much alive—there are people living in them. With some investment, the owners can actually do great service to themselves as well as their inherited legacy. Converting such buildings into museums isn't always the best approach," Tipnis said.

The work will take four more months to complete. But the Baglas have found one prospective bride already.

Photos: Yogesh Kumar

Affordable housing focus of master plan

Much-Delayed Plan Could Be Ready In 3 Mths

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New Delhi: Having missed five deadlines Master Plan Delhi 2021 is inching closer to its final notification. With several changes to the existing draft along with new proposals, officials say the master plan is developing into one geared towards affordable housing.

Two chapters still to be notified are transportation and environment. While the chapter on environment is said to be in its final stages and about to be sent for final notification after public feedback, the chapter on transportation is being reviewed by an expert panel. The whole process is expected to be wrapped up within three months' time.

The new master plan will offer 15% extra floor-area ratio (FAR) to group housing societies as an incentive to develop flats for economically weaker sections. This will be over the 400 FAR offered to these societies. The developers choosing to build flats on the over 22,000 hectares of pooled land can put the surplus land, afforded by the extra FAR, to commercial use but only after providing EWS housing," said Balvinder Kumar, vice-chairman, DDA.

Incentives in the form of additional FAR will also be used to transform existing commercial and residential spaces. According to the new master plan, if market associations or group housing societies agree to demolish and redevelop their properties in line with the new norms, they will be allowed 1.5 times the existing FAR.

The master plan will also

provide benefits to those who live or work out of eco-friendly buildings. The proposal brought in by DDA will allow 1% to 5% of additional FAR to structures that adhere to the green building norms, based on the ratings given to them by certified agencies. "There are several known organizations that certify and rate the 'greenness' or environment-friendliness of buildings. The applicants can show us the ratings and earn the extra FAR," said a senior DDA official.

Another measure to preserve environment will be the creation of natural conservation zones. The major green spaces in Delhi, including biodiversity parks, regional parks and ridge area, will be part of NCZs. "The National Capital Region planning board had already conceived of this and we thought

of incorporating it in our draft plans. Through this policy we will also contain the construction activity in the area. Construction in only 0.5% of these areas will be allowed," added the senior authority official.

MPD 2021 was first notified in February 2007 after which it is supposed to be reviewed every five years comprehensively and every two years in the form of a mid-term review.

After a review in 2012, DDA is right now working on a mid-term review of the plan. Around 120 modifications are estimated to have been made to the existing master plan. A new chapter on transit-oriented development is being added to the existing draft and the chapter on environment, introduced for the first time, is being finalized.

NEW PROVISIONS



MPD 2021 was first notified in 2007 | Review started in 2012

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- Additional 15% floor area ratio (FAR) on group housing societies for the economically weaker section
- 1.5 times FAR for commercial or residential establishments redeveloped on new building norms
- 1 to 5% additional FAR for 'green' buildings to promote eco-friendly technology

- Creation of a natural conservation zone to protect Delhi's green areas; 0.5% construction cap on such areas
- DEADLINES MISSED**
 - July 2013, December 2013, January 14, March 14 and September 14, 2014
 - Likely timeframe to notify the remaining chapters of MPD | 3 months

11 FIRs filed against parking agents

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New Delhi: A day after TOI reported that parking attendants were fleecing people and charging anything from Rs 50 to Rs 250 at various markets owing to the festive rush, North Delhi Municipal Corporation filed 11 FIRs against parking contractors on Monday.

Some parking contractors in Karol Bagh, Rajendra Nagar and Chandni Chowk were also blacklisted after a surprise inspection by corporation officials on Monday morning.

Commissioner P K Gupta said a hike in parking rates is in the works but overcharging is a crime. "We have filed FIRs against parking contractors. In the Karol Bagh market, parking attendants were charging much more than the rates. The violations were many—information wasn't displayed, attendants were not in uniform and more cars were parked than was permitted," he said.



TIMES IMPACT

While North Corporation's standing committee has cleared the proposal for hiking parking rates, attendants at many markets have already started charging the proposed rates. On Sunday, TOI spoke to many distressed shoppers complaining of overcharging. Several complaints were posted on the councillors' and the corporation's Facebook page. "The attendants were asking for Rs 100 for two hours at Karol

Bagh. It's ridiculous," said Rohtash Singh, a businessman.

The official parking rates are Rs 10 for the first 10 hours and Rs 20 for the next 10 hours. But now, North Corporation is mulling Rs 20 for the first one hour and Rs 10 for every subsequent hour. "All councillors and officials in the Karol Bagh zone have been instructed to carry out regular inspections at markets to ensure people aren't fleeced. You can also file a police complaint against any such malpractice and action will be taken," said Rajesh Bhatia, Karol Bagh zone committee chairman.

Parking contractors have been told to put up information boards with their numbers and parking rates. South Corporation officials are also cracking down on parking contractors but no FIRs were filed. "Zonal officials are told to keep a watch over these contractors; if they are overcharging, their contracts will be terminated immediately," said Subhash Arya, leader of the house, South Corporation.

Cops try to stop gambling, attacked

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Two constables were attacked by a group of men when they tried to stop them from gambling at a building under construction in Uttam Nagar, west Delhi, around 9pm on Sunday. Police nabbed five people, including a juvenile, from the scene.

The incident took place near the Nawada housing complex. The cops received a call from a resident that five to six men had gathered at the construction site and were creating a ruckus. Constables Mandeep and Shailendra reached the spot and asked the men to leave.

Police said the men, all of whom were drunk, started

In another incident, a traffic constable was thrown out of a moving car in Seemapuri, northeast Delhi, on Saturday night

abusing the constables and threatened to beat them up if they did not leave them alone. When the cops tried to remove them forcibly, a scuffle broke out. One of the miscreants charged at them with a stick; after the blow, the policemen were pelted with stones.

Soon, residents of the colony came to their rescue. They chased and caught hold of the five men. A team from the Uttam Nagar police sta-

tion also arrived after the constables sought reinforcement. The cops were taken to DDU Hospital. They had sustained injuries on the head and arms. They were released from the hospital on Monday morning.

Police said the accused, Chandar (38), Suresh (30), Krishna (34) and Naresh (36), were all residents of Dwarka and had come to have dinner at an eatery after a few drinks. "A case under sections 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of his duties), 307 (attempt to murder) and 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) was registered," said additional commissioner (west) Ranvir Singh.

In a similar incident, a traffic constable was thrown out of a moving car in Seemapuri, northeast Delhi, on Saturday night. Police said the traffic cop had flagged down a Mahindra Xylo driven by Anuj Kumar near the Seemapuri crossing for going in the wrong direction. He asked the driver to take a U-turn and stop his vehicle on the other side for a challan, sitting beside the driver's seat.

Instead of stopping, Anuj drove the vehicle for about 4km and then pushed the constable out of it and tried to speed away. His colleagues pursued and nabbed Anuj while he headed for his home in Kalyanpuri. A case of attempt to murder has been registered against him.

Trafficked teen flees employer's house, rescued

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New Delhi: A 13-year-old school dropout from Jharkhand's Maoist-hit Simdega district promised domestic work in Delhi was found at Rajouri Garden Metro station by police on Sunday after she ran away from her employer's house unable to bear the mistreatment. Her story has again brought to spotlight how children from the interiors of the troubled state are finding themselves in the capital's homes.

The rescue of this girl comes a day after wanted trafficker Pannalal Mahto and his

The girl said she was brought to Delhi by one Raju two months ago. Police are probing the involvement of an illegal placement agency

wife Sunita were arrested. Pannalal hails from Jharkhand and is known for his influence among placement agencies. The crime branch of Delhi Police and Jharkhand Police are jointly probing Pannalal's links with Maoists.

The 13-year-old girl at Rajouri Garden Metro station told a surprised police team that she was desperate to return to her family in Simdega where she said she was studying in a school. She says she wants to return to school. She has been put in the care of Nirmal Chhaya children's home in keeping with the orders of

the Child Welfare Committee. Police are now trying to trace her parents.

Police are also investigating the involvement of a member of an illegal placement agency who brought her here with the promise to provide her work. The child, in her statement before the Child Welfare Committee, said she was brought to Delhi by one 'Raju' two months ago. 'Raju' then sent her to a private residence where her employer whom she addressed as 'Aunt' used to scold her every time she did not like her work. The woman even tried to call Raju but every time his phone was unreachable, the girl said. She has told CWC that she had been asked to leave several times.

On October 19, she left the house and managed to reach Rajouri Garden Metro station where she was luckily found by police. In its order on Monday, the Child Welfare Committee has mentioned that the child does not know the address of the house in which she was placed for work. She failed to identify the house when she was taken to the area by police.

Speaking to TOI, Rishikant from Shakti Vahini, which has been "following the case closely", said human traffickers are operating in the guise of placement agents and hence "CWC must call for an interstate investigation into how the child reached Delhi and landed up at the Metro station". The NGO has also contacted the superintendent of police, Simdega, to trace her family.

LET THERE BE LIGHTS

Anindya Chattopadhyay



SPOILT FOR CHOICE: Markets are flooded with bright and colourful options for Diwali

NCR eco zones shrinking: Survey

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New Delhi: An assessment of the extent of damage or diversions from satellite images and maps prepared by the National Remote Sensing Centre has revealed an "alarming" shrinkage of the natural conservation zones, the National Capital Region Planning Board, in its affidavit to the National Green Tribunal, has said.

The NCR planning board has claimed it has written to state governments several times seeking reasons for such shrinkage. Replies haven't been forthcoming, it said.

In its affidavit, NCRPB claims that it sent letters dated April 7, May 6 and May 12 of this year to the NCR states of Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan about the issue.

It also claimed that, concerned over such large diversions, it had on June 23 written to all the nodal officers (principal secretaries) of these states. NCRPB has requested the NGT to take action against erring states.

"They (states) must satisfy the tribunal regarding such alarming shrinkage as observed through satellite imageries... your lordships may impose sanctions, and orders be issued to rectify the wrong," the affidavit states.

NCZs are eco-sensitive areas marked out in sub-regional plans and master plans where large constructions are not allowed. The affidavit makes another interesting suggestion—"in view of the very low existing

AFFIDAVIT BY NCRPB

forest cover of the region (4.02%) it is imperative to bring more areas under forest so as to maintain the ecological balance".

All wastelands identified in the existing land use 1999 and proposed land use plan 2021, irrigation canals, drains, roads, railway lines and village common lands are thereafter proposed to be brought under forest cover.

The affidavit was submitted in an application filed by the Legal Aid Com-

mittee of the NGT Bar Association against the ministry of environment and forests.

"The NGT bench will hear the matter again on November 11," said Raj Panjwani, senior advocate representing the applicant.

Panjwani explained that in such cases punishment could be sought for officers involved. The corruption angle can be explored to see how the land has been diverted and the 'polluter pays' principle will apply.

NCRPB's remarks on a proposal to treat even wasteland and common lands as forest may ensure protection for densely forested zones like Mangar Bani along the Gurgaon-Faridabad highway.

But land use specifications in the master or regional plan do not seem to be a deterrent. A study carried out by Intach (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) last year had found that as many as 21 lakes have disappeared in the national capital alone since 1997-98.

Row over enforcing PUC rules

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Though the lieutenant governor's approval for making PUC certificates mandatory for buying petrol is yet to come, departments are already at loggerheads over enforcement.

"While the proposal for mandatory PUC certification came from the environment department, enforcement of the rule is likely to be handled by the transport or food and supplies department," said a senior government official. However, the transport department, which was asked to look after enforcement, said it doesn't have enough personnel and that the food and supplies department should take on the responsibility as petrol



PASSING THE BUCK

pumps fall under them. The food and supplies department, in turn, has also refused claiming it's not their job, said sources in the government.

Transport department officials admitted that the issue

came up for discussion. "There is an acute lack of personnel in the department. Diverting them to check PUC certificates at petrol pumps is impossible," said the official.

Officials also argued there are thousands of petrol pumps and stationing officers at each of them is next to impossible. The same argument, said sources, has been forwarded by the food and supplies department, which also went on to add it was not its responsibility to deploy personnel at petrol pumps.

The proposal, which is awaiting clearance, will allow refuelling station employees to turn away customers without a PUC certificate. The fine for the first violation is Rs 1,000 and Rs 2,000 thereafter.

CRYING OUT FOR PROTECTION



Natural conservation zones (NCZs) in regional plan 2021

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS SUCH AS
Extension of Aravali ridge in Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi
Forest areas
Rivers and tributaries of Yamuna, Ganga, Kali, Hindon, Sahibi (Najafgarh drain in Delhi)
Sanctuaries
Major lakes and water bodies such as Badkal lake, Surajkund, Damdama in Haryana and Siltserh in Rajasthan

GROUNDWATER RECHARGE ZONES SUCH AS
Water bodies, ox-bow lakes and paleochannels

