MANAGEMENT TRUST

In December 2017, all five partner signatory agencies to the 2007 MoU, along with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, created a Management Trust to ensure a visitor experience in line with the design of this new city park. The creation of the Trust allows revenue generated through entrance ticket sales and other revenue-generating activities to be ploughed back into the maintenance of Sunder Nursery. AKTC has accepted responsibility for managing the Sunder Nursery and the upcoming Humayun’s Tomb Interpretation Centre for a period of 10 years. During this time AKTC will strive to ensure a world class visitor experience while aiming towards financial sustainability of the Sunder Nursery.

The Management Trust will be operationalised during the summer of 2018, with facilities planned under the Management Trust Decree becoming operational in a phased manner over 2018-19.

FACILITIES

The facilities wing of the Humayun’s Tomb Interpretation Centre is presently under construction in the Sunder Nursery. The wing includes rooms for lectures and film screenings, food kiosks, a souvenir shop and multi-purpose halls for training programmes that are envisaged as part of the project.

A sunken amphitheatre with monuments incorporated into the rear of the space has been created to hold cultural evenings and festivals celebrating local musical traditions.

Though access to Sunder Nursery and Humayun’s Tomb is limited because of a narrow 16th century road leading to the river, 300 parking spaces have been created both within and on the edges of Sunder Nursery. Toilets are provided both within the facility buildings and as stand-alone structures in easily accessible locations.

NIZAMUDDIN URBAN RENEWAL INITIATIVE

The creation of the 90 acre Sunder city park is part of a larger urban development initiative wherein the Aga Khan Development Network has implemented conservation of 50 monuments across the 300 acres of project area, including the Humayun’s Tomb. The conservation effort is now being culminated in the creation of a state-of-art site museum at the World Heritage Site.

The environmental and conservation efforts are coupled with a major socio-economic effort aimed at improving the quality of life for the residents of Nizamuddin basti through building and providing education, health, sanitation infrastructure, providing vocational training, creating economic opportunities and carrying out urban improvements by landscaping neighbourhood parks and providing street furniture.

For more information please visit www.akdn.org or contact the Aga Khan Trust for Culture,
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Follow us on: www.nizamuddinnewal.org or Facebook www.facebook.com/nizamuddinNewal
BACKGROUND

From the 14th century onwards, the Nizamuddin area has seen a profusion of building activity. Serai’s, tombs, baolis, mosques, lofty gateways and garden pavilions have all been built along the River Yamuna. In the 16th century, the Grand Trunk road was built through the area, which encompassed several enclosed garden tombs, including that of Emperor Humayun. By the 19th century, the area stretching from Purana Qila at its northern edge and Barahpalli at its southern edge – the first Mughal city of Delhi – was being used for agriculture.

It was in the early 20th century, during the building of the capital complex of New Delhi, that Sunder Nursery was established north of Humayun’s Tomb. It was created to propagate saplings for New Delhi’s avenues and experiment with plants brought from other parts of the British Empire.

Following a 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Central Public Works Department, the Archaeological Survey of India and the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) commenced conservation and landscape works at Sunder Nursery. The nursery would eventually become a 90-acre (36 hectares) city park with distinct heritage, ecological and nursery zones, as well as all the expected facilities.

LANDSCAPE

Landscape architect M. Shafique designed this new city park along a central axis plane around which gardens and landscapes were arranged. Ranging from formal gardens to informal settings for families to enjoy picnics, the landscaping of the park offers a variety of recreational and cultural venues. Water features, ponds and lakes are part of the master-plan, which includes nursery beds, a flower showcase, arboretum, rose garden and orchards. To create the urban oasis, the masterplan derived inspiration from the traditional Indian concept of congruency between nature, garden and utility and coupled it with environmental conservation.

The grand central vista, which is over 500 meters long, follows the path of the 16th century Grand Trunk Road, connecting the entrance zone of the Humayan’s Tomb World Heritage Site with the 16th century Arjanpur Serai to the north. The Mughal-inspired gardens along the central vista employ monolithic marble fountains and flowing water set amidst geometric flower beds and raised sandstone pathways. Forming the heart of the city park, it is here that visitors are expected to congregate. A large lanudin is available for winter picnics. The lake at the northern edge of the central vista will be a refuge for Delhi’s citizens with walks, seating and pavilions along the edges. Landscape works at Sunder Nursery have been supported by the Norwegian Agency for Foreign Affairs.

PLANT NURSERY

Twenty acres of the Sunder Nursery site, which has served as a plant nursery for 100 years, will remain in active nursery used by the Central Public Works Department. Spread across the northern and western edge of the site, the Nursery would be the largest such facility in central Delhi. Nursery facilities such as mist chambers are being provided. A “garden house” to showcase tropical and desert flora is also planned.

A specially built facility allows the display of Sunder Nursery’s rich bonsai collection of over 400 plants. Missing species are expected to be added as the collection expands. As with the rest of the site, the nursery beds have been provided with an irrigation system and electricity network.

ECOLOGY

Sunder Nursery now serves as Delhi’s first arboretum with almost 100 tree species, the largest number in any of Delhi’s parks. A contiguous stretch of dense green cover across Sunder Nursery continues on to the adjoining National Zoological Park and the Bataashewala Complex, providing a protected bird habitat for the ground nesting national bird, the peacock.

Over the last decade, hundreds of truckloads of construction rubble were removed and 20,000 saplings planted, drawing 80 species of birds to the site. Many more are expected now that the water bodies are full. Sixty species of butterflies have already made the park their home.

To attract the 500,000 school children who visit the adjoining Humayun’s Tomb annually and serve as an educational resource on Delhi’s ecology, a 20-acre micro-habitat zone showcases plants of the ridge, riverine, and marshy landscapes that were once found in Delhi.

WORLD HERITAGE

Conservation of the 15 monuments that stand upon the 90-acre Sunder Nursery. Bataashewala complex have also undergone the same careful conservation as Humayun’s Tomb. Conservation required persistent efforts to free the 12-acre Bataashewala complex from encroachment.

The conservation works draw attention to a unique ensemble of 16th century garden tombs. In 2016, UNESCO extended World Heritage designation to twelve structures conserved by AKTC, including six standing within the Sunder Nursery: Laxmiwala Bari, Sunder Bari, Sunderwala Mahal, Mirza Musaafa Hussain’s Tomb, Chota Bataashewala and the Unknown Mughal’s tomb.

AKTC has also sought the designation of the Purana Qila - Humayun’s Tomb zone as an archaeological park. Together with the Humayan’s Tomb and Sunder Nursery, the archaeological park would include the Millennium Park, the National Zoological Park and the Purana Qila – over 600 acres in total. It is hoped that, in the future, visitor access will be possible across these sites, thereby truly creating a “Central Park” for Delhi.
BACKGROUND

From the 14th century onwards, the Nizamuddin area has seen a profusion of building activity. Serai’s, Tombs, Badshis, mosques, lotus fountains and garden pavilions have all been built along the River Yamuna. In the 16th century, the Grand Trunk road was built through the area, which encompassed several enclosed garden tombs, including that of Emperor Humayun. By the 19th century, the area stretching from Purana Qila at its northern edge and Barahpul at its southern edge – the first Mughal city of Delhi – was being used for agriculture.

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Following a 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Central Public Works Department, the Archaeological Survey of India and the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) commenced conservation and landscape works at Sunder Nursery. The Nursery would eventually become a 90-acre (36 hectares) city park with distinct heritage, ecological and nursery zones, as well as all the expected facilities.

LANDSCAPE

Landscape architect M. Shaher designed this new city park along a central axial spine around which gardens and landscapes were arranged. Ranging from formal gardens to informal settings for families to enjoy picnics, the landscaping of the park offers a variety of recreational and cultural venues. Water features, ponds and lakes are part of the master-plan, which includes nursery beds, a flower showcase, arboretum, rose garden and orchards. To create the urban oasis, the masterplan derived inspiration from the traditional Indian concept of congruency between nature, garden and utility and coupled it with environmental conservation.

The grand central vista, which is over 500 meters long, follows the path of the 16th century Grand Trunk Road, connecting the entrance zone of the Humayun’s Tomb World Heritage Site with the 16th century Azimjan Serai to the north. The Mughal inspired gardens along the central vista employ monolithic marble fountains and flowing water set amidst geometric flower beds and raised sandstone pathways. Forming the heart of the city park, it is here that visitors are expected to congregate. A large maula is available for winter picnics. The lake at the northern edge of the central vista will be a refuge for Delhi’s citizens with walks, seating and pavilions along the edges. Landscape works at Sunder Nursery have been supported by the Norwegian Agency for Foreign Affairs.

PLANT NURSERY

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WORLD HERITAGE

Conservation of the 15 monuments that stand upon the 90-acre Sunder Nursery Bataashwala complex have also undergone the same careful conservation as Humayun’s Tomb. Conservation required persistent efforts to free the 12-acre Bataashwala complex from encroachments.

The conservation works draw attention to a unique ensemble of 16th century garden tombs. In 2016, UNESCO extended World Heritage designation to twelve structures conserved by AKTC, including six standing within the Sunder Nursery: Lakkawala Baj, Sunder Baj, Sunderwala Mahal, Mirza Musa Afzal Husain’s Tomb, Chotta Bataashwala and the Unknown Mughal’s tomb.

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ARMAI HOUSE was constructed in the northern edge of the Nursery (top): Prof. M. Zhidom, the landscape architect explaining the construction of some elements in 2010 (centre): children’s play area and other landscape elements in the Nursery (bottom panels).
Bird Species
80
Butterfly Species
36
Native Tree Species
280
Trees mapped on GIS
4200
Saplings planted
20,000
Acres of Biodiversity Zone created
30
Acres of Nursery beds created
20
Bird Species
80
Butterfly Species
36

1. Sunder Nursery in 2008-09 before landscape development

2. Boulder and rocks carefully collected from various sites across Delhi and surrounding regions and carefully arranged on the mounds to recreate a ‘Rock’ or ridge-like appearance.

3. Over 20,000 saplings of over 280 tree species have been planted at Sunder Nursery over the past decade. A 30-acre ecological zone has been created for awareness amongst visiting school children. This zone boasts of micro-habitats representing those historically found in the Delhi region such as ridge, terrace, marshy areas complete with their associated planting.

The Special Gardens

The entrance zone of Sunder Nursery comprises of a series of intimate southern gardens and spaces for annual flower beds at various levels. It is expected that the southern gardens, with their sense of enclosure, will be favored by school groups gathering in the shade.

In 2009, northwest remodelled a 17th-century Lotus pond that would have stood within the enclosed mounds of Sunder Bagh & Sukhna /Welsh. Though dismantled, the Lotus pond has been carefully restored and Lotus once again flourishing here.

BIODIVERSITY:

TREES OF SUNDER NURSERY
Biodiversity:
Trees of Sunder Nursery

- 280 Native Tree Species
- 4200 Trees mapped on GIS
- 20,000 Saplings planted
- 30 Acres of Biodiversity Zone created
- 20 Acres of Nursery beds created
- 80 Bird Species
- 36 Butterfly Species

2. Boulders and rocks carefully collected from various sites across Delhi and surrounding regions and carefully arranged on the mounds to recreate a 'Roli' or ridge-like appearance.

3. Over 20,000 saplings of over 280 tree species have been planted at Sunder Nursery over the past decade. A 30-acre ecological zone has been created for awareness amongst visiting school children. The zone boasts of micro-habitats representing those historically found in the Delhi region such as ridge, terrace, marshy areas complete with their associated planting.

The Special Gardens

The entrance zone of Sunder Nursery comprises of a series of intimate water gardens and spaces for animals and flowers at various levels. It is expected that the modern gardens, with their sense of enclosure, will be favored by school groups gathering in the shade.

In 2009, the lakeside received a 19th-century lotus pond that would have stood within the enclosed gardens of Sunder Bagh & Sundar Nursery. Much though dilapidated, the Lotuses pond has been carefully restored and Lotus now again blooming here.
SUNDER NURSERY
Landscape Masterplan

The landscape master plan, designed by Shaher Associates, has created a truly urban scale, deriving inspiration from the traditional Indian concept of congruity between nature, garden and utility coupled with environmental conservation. In addition to the formal landscape in the setting of the monuments, a micro habitat zone has been created for flora that occupies Delhi’s ridge, river edge, plains and other specialised zones.