



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

**Humayun's Tomb - Sunder Nursery - Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti
URBAN RENEWAL INITIATIVE**



SUNDER NURSERY

DELHI'S *CENTRAL* PARK

In partnership with
Central Public Works Department & Archaeological Survey of India



BACKGROUND

From the 14th century onwards, the Nizamuddin area has seen a profusion of building activity. Serai's, Tombs, Baoli's, 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 Barahpulla at its southern edge – the first Mughal city of Delhi – was being used for agriculture.

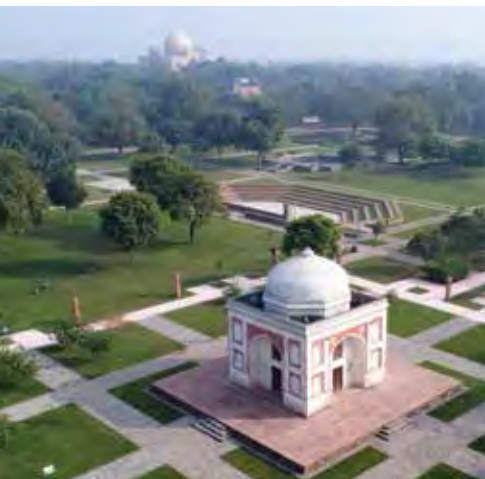


It was in the early 20th century, during the building of the capitol complex of New Delhi, that Sunder Nursery was established north of Humayun's Tomb. It was created to propagate saplings for New Delhi's avenues and experiment with plants brought from other parts of the British Empire.

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 hectare) city park with distinct heritage, ecological and nursery zones, as well as all the expected facilities.

LANDSCAPE

Landscape architect M. Shaheer 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 Azimganj 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 *maidan* 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 of Foreign Affairs.

Sunder Nursery sits in a significant cultural landscape owing to its proximity to the Dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, along the Mughal era Grand Trunk road and also along the river Yamuna before it changed course in the 19th century (top) the restored ornamental domed ceiling of Sunder Burj (centre) three monuments in Sunder Nursery are part of the Humayun's Tomb World Heritage Site (bottom).

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 70 acres, 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 300 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 Batashewala 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- Batashewala complex have also undergone the same careful conservation as Humayun’s Tomb. Conservation required persistent efforts to free the 12-acre Batashewala 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: Lakkarwala Burj, Sunder Burj, Sunderwala Mahal, Mirza Muzaffar Hussain’s Tomb, Chotta Batashewala 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 Humayun’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.



Lakkarwala Burj before and after its conservation and landscape restoration (top), creating bird habitats (central) and water bodies to enhance ecological significance and biodiversity at Sunder Nursery



Bonsai House was constructed in the northern edge of the Nursery (top) Prof. M Shaheer, the landscape architect explaining the construction of stone elements to craftsmen, (centre) chaddar / cascade and other landscape element in the Nursery (bottom picture),

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 Deed 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.



1. Sunder Nursery in 2008-09 before landscape development



2. Boulders and rocks carefully collected from various sites across Delhi and surrounding regions and carefully arranged on the mounds to recreate a 'kohi' 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, riverine, marshy areas complete with their associated planting.

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

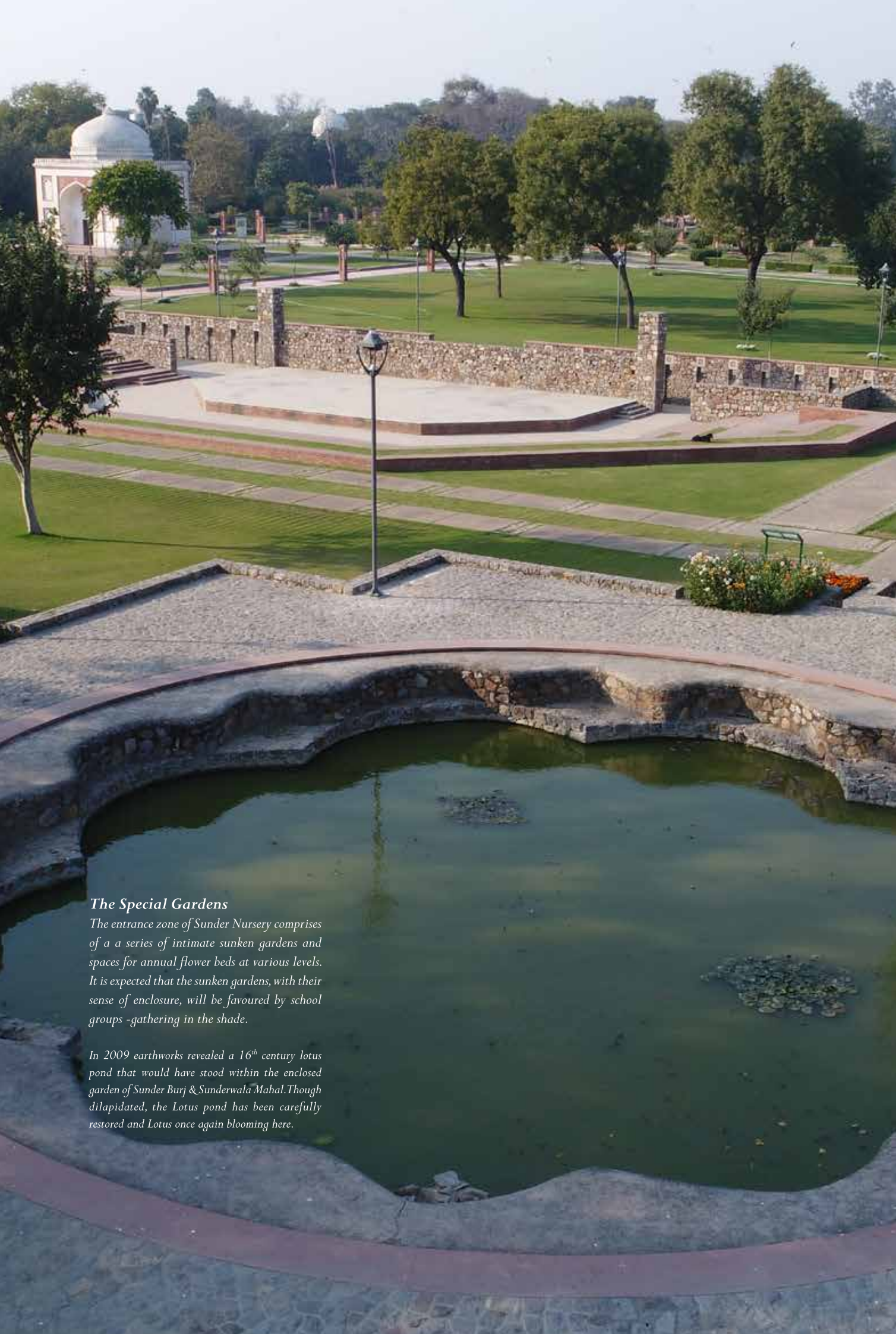
80

Bird Species

36

Butterfly Species

**BIODIVERSITY:
TREES OF SUNDER NURSERY**



The Special Gardens

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

In 2009 earthworks revealed a 16th century lotus pond that would have stood within the enclosed garden of Sunder Burj & Sunderwala Mahal. Though dilapidated, the Lotus pond has been carefully restored and Lotus once again blooming here.

SUNDER NURSERY

Landscape Masterplan

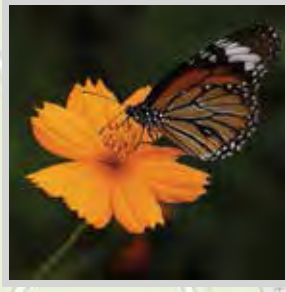
The landscape master plan, designed by Shaheer Associates has created a truly urban scale, deriving inspiration from the traditional Indian concept of congruency between nature, garden and utility coupled with environmental conservation. In addition to the formal landscape in the setting of the monuments,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



Transformations:

- Conservation of Monuments
- Improved entry & roads
- Reinforcing heritage axis
- Redevelopment of nursery areas
- Buildings for nursery use
- New plantations

Recreational features & aquatic display
Linkages & infill in forest areas
Path system
Formal & informal Gardens
Arboretum
Buildings for cultural & nursery use



SHOWCASING DELHI'S MICROHABITATS

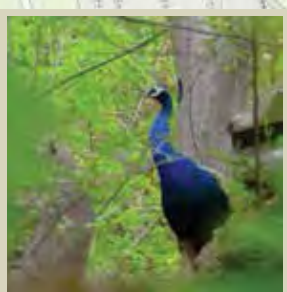
GARDEN HOUSE
will hold plants from tropical and southern parts of India on display as well as interpretation facility for microhabitat zones



BONSAI HOUSE
hosts exquisite species of bonsai - some over 80 years old donated by renowned botanist Mr. Agnihotri in 1950's.



GARDEN HOUSE
BONSAI HOUSE
NATURE TRAILS
FORMAL GARDENS
PEAFOWL HABITAT



ECOLOGY

PEAFOWL HABITAT
AKTC has planted trees and shrubs that would attract a number of birds with their high canopies, dense understorey shrubs and fruit-bearing species

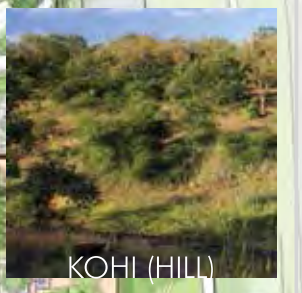
Inspired from traditional Mughal gardens and Persian carpet patterns, the **CENTRAL AXIS** acts as the primary pedestrian spine for visitors to the Sunder Nursery.

FIRST ARBORETUM OF THE CITY
A large Arboretum and microhabitat zone which showcases 300 varieties of tree species and the different habitats (ridge/river/flood plain and a lake for water borne) of the city respectively, has been created.

Apart from being a walk-in-open-air-museum of trees of Delhi, a significant bird habitat has been created to bring back birds, some of which are rapidly disappearing from the city.



DABAR (MARSHY)



KOHL (HILL)



KHADAR (RIVERINE)

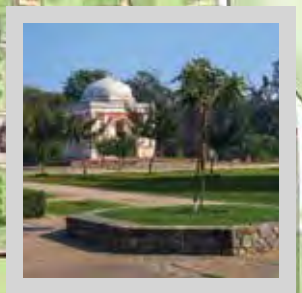


BANGAR (ALLUVIAL)



HERITAGE TRAIL

MONUMENTS AT SUNDER NURSERY



← TOWARDS MATHURA ROAD
← TOWARDS SAFDARJUNG'S TOMB
LODHI