

## 5. THE DARGAH COMPLEX

**The *dargah*:** The Dargah of Nasiruddin Mahmud Chiragh-e-Dehli, like that of other Muslim saints, is believed to confer sanctity on the area surrounding it. The tomb of the mystic is surrounded by tombs of prominent religious and aristocratic personalities of the period. The Dargah Complex has a relatively untouched, quiet and tranquil environ, with shady trees dotting the irregular rectangle of the compound.

**The eastern gateway:** From the village square of Chirag Dilli village, a lane leads to the eastern gateway of the dargah. This is a square, domed gateway with slightly sloping walls characteristic of Tughlaq architecture.

**The mosque:** To the west of Chiragh-e-Dehli's Tomb, and abutting the wall of the Dargah Complex, is a mosque that was built by a later Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar (r. AD 1713–19).

**The Mahfilkhana:** Perhaps the most different-looking of the medieval monuments in the Dargah Complex is the Mahfilkhana (assembly hall) dating back to the Lodi period. Although the Mahfilkhana's square stone pillars, along with their carved capitals and the arched niches above have been whitewashed over, the upper sections are unpainted.

## 6. TOMB OF BAHLOL LODI

Outside the Dargah Complex but right next door to it is the tomb of Bahlol Lodi (r. AD 1451–89), the first ruler of the Lodi Dynasty. Bahlol Lodi's Tomb lies to the west of the Dargah Complex, separated from it by the wall enclosing the complex. This is a somewhat unusual tomb, in that it has none of the flamboyance and grandeur one would generally associate with an emperor's mausoleum. Interestingly, though this building is 'officially' accepted, by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and others as the tomb of Bahlol Lodi, there is a school of thought that suggests an alternate building (the Sheesh Gumbad in Lodi Garden) as his tomb.



Also dotted about the Dargah Complex are a number of graves, mostly of the Lodi era. A small, hexagonal *chhatra* (raised, domed, pavilion-like structure)-style dome that stands at the southern corner of the mosque of Farrukhsiyar is supposed to be the tomb of the granddaughter of Sheikh Fariduddin Shakarganj (c. AD 1173 –1266), a much-revered Sufi saint and the predecessor of Nizamuddin Auliya. However, it is extremely unlikely that this tomb is Shakarganj's granddaughter's, since the tomb is of too late a vintage to have been hers. Within the Dargah Complex is also a wall mosque and a Majlishkhana (an assembly hall, consisting of arched *dalans* or verandahs), now barely distinguishable because the arched doorways have been bricked up and the Majlishkhana converted into a residence.



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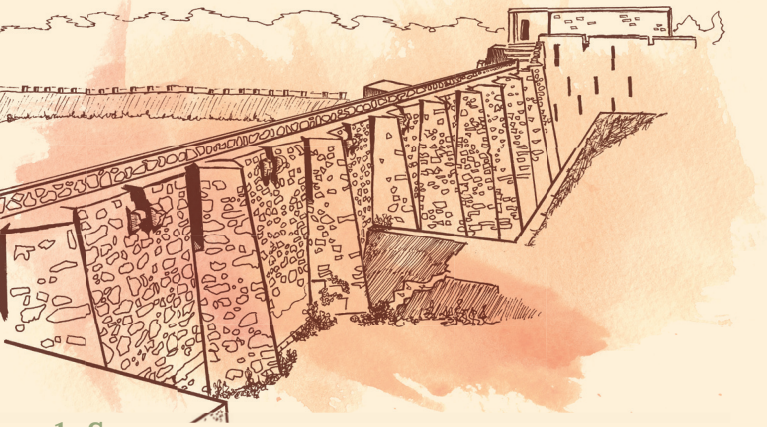
INTACH

Delhi Chapter

# a walk around CHIRAG DILLI AND KHIRKI







### 1. SATPULA

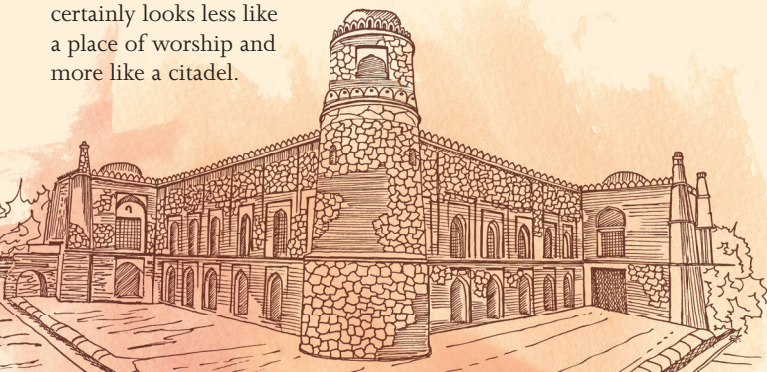
Along the southern wall of Jahanpanah, Muhammad Tughlaq proposed a massive dam, to provide irrigation to the fields and gardens, located in the south of the city. The water was drawn from an artificial lake, fed by rainwater.

Satpula (‘Bridge of Seven Piers’) consists of eleven arched openings, of which four are subsidiary and seven primary. The seven main arched gates would originally have held sliding wooden sluices; you can still see the grooves in the side walls of each gate where these would have fitted. The waters of Satpula were traditionally supposed to have curative powers; this was derived from the belief that the Sufi saint Chiragh-e-Dehli had used its water to perform *wazu*, the ritual ablutions prior to *namaz* (prayer).

### 2. KHIRKI MASJID

Khan-e-Jahan Junan Shah, the *wazir* (Prime Minister) of Firoz Shah Tughlaq (r. AD 1351–88), is popularly believed to have constructed seven mosques across Delhi. These included the Kali Masjid in Nizamuddin, the Kali (or Kalan) Masjid in Shahjahanabad, the Khirki Masjid, the main highlight of Khirki village, and a few others.

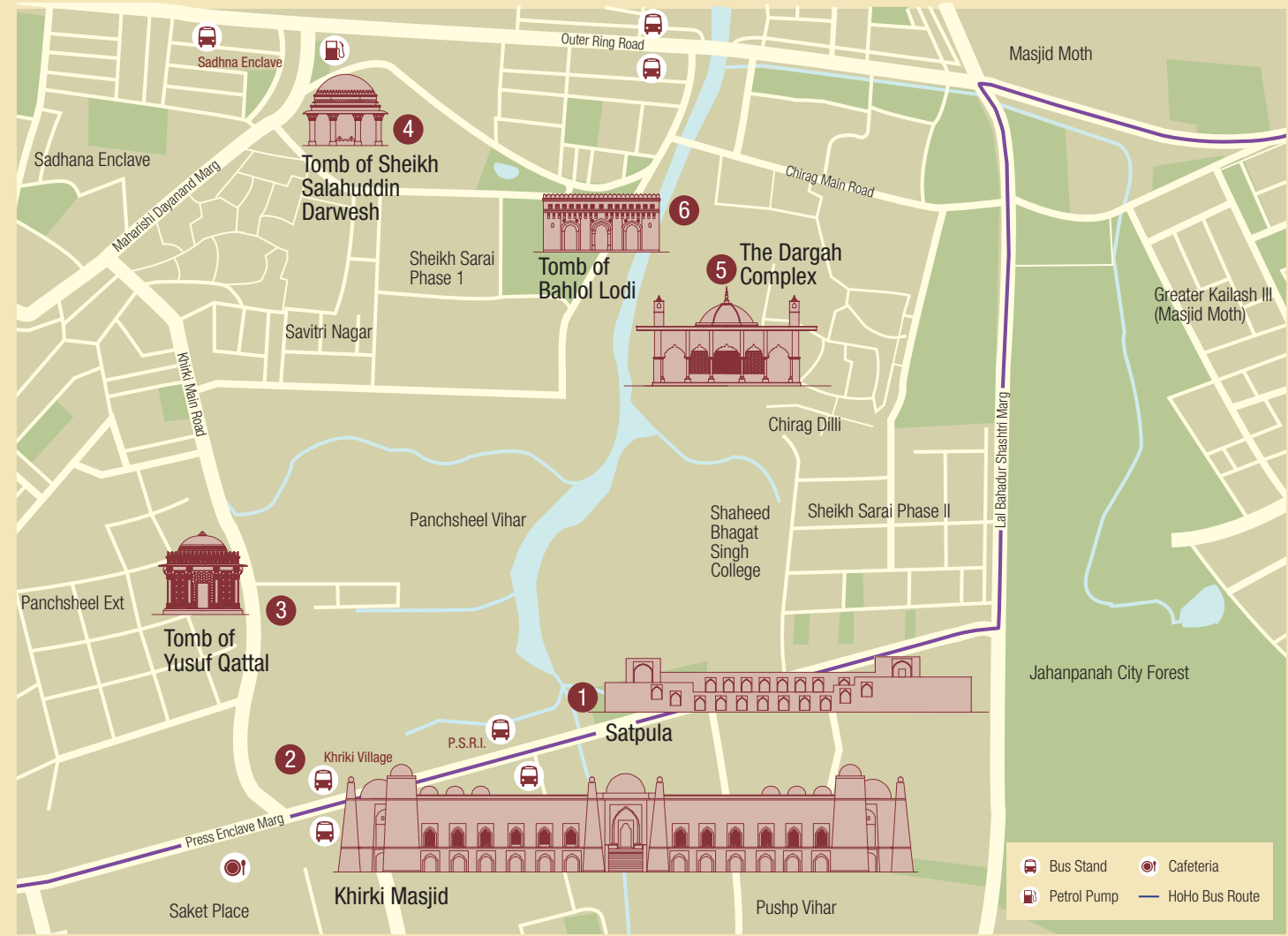
The residents of Khirki village refer to the mosque as the *qila* (fort) rather than as the *masjid* (mosque). The mosque with its massive sloping rubble walls, corner towers, and forbidding façade, certainly looks less like a place of worship and more like a citadel.



Chirag Dilli is named for the much-revered Sufi mystic, Nasiruddin Mahmud, Roshan Chiragh-e-Dehli (‘The Illuminated Lamp of Delhi’), who came to Delhi in the early fourteenth century and was a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya, and later became his successor. Along with Khirki village, south-west of Chirag Dilli, this forms one of Delhi’s oldest neighbourhoods, dominated by some interesting structures—both religious as well as secular—from as far back as the fourteenth century. There is Satpula here, the dam that Muhammad Tughlaq built when he established his city of Jahanpanah. Near it is the huge mosque built by the *wazir* of Muhammad Tughlaq’s successor, Firoz Shah Tughlaq. There is the still-venerated Dargah of Chiragh-e-Dehli

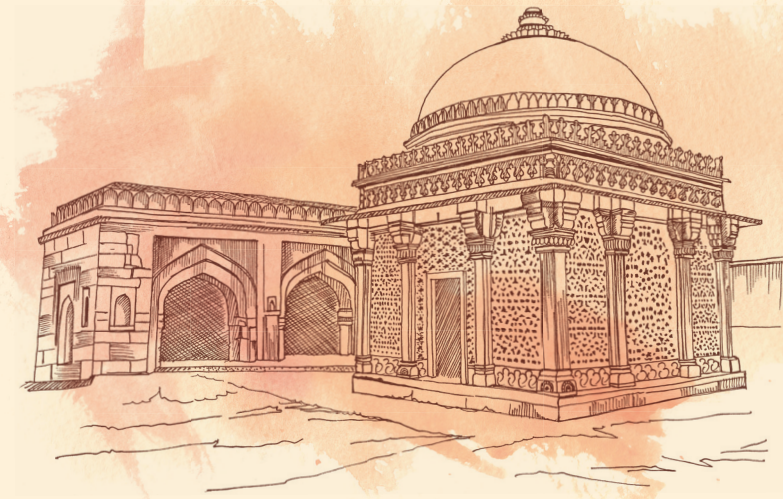
himself, and, in its vicinity, the tomb of Bahlol Lodi, the first of the Lodi sultans. The village of Chirag Dilli, in itself, makes for a rewarding walk: it is one of Delhi’s more untouched urban villages, retaining many signs of a long and interesting past—in its gateways, its village square, and in its occasionally—visible signs of old architecture. The village wall, with its gates and turrets, was built under the aegis of the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah ‘Rangeela’ (r. AD 1719–48). Although much of the village now consists of modern buildings, Chirag Dilli still has a number of old houses: Mughal havelis, colonial structures, and more.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset. Entry: Free



### 3. TOMB OF YUSUF QATTAL

A popular Sufi mystic during the reign of Ibrahim Lodi (r. AD 1517–26), Yusuf Qattal was a disciple of Qazi Jalaluddin of Lahore. Yusuf Qattal died in AD 1527, and his tomb was built near the Khirki Masjid. When it was built, Yusuf Qattal’s Tomb would have been a very striking one indeed.



### 4. TOMB AND MOSQUE OF SHEIKH SALAHUDDIN DARWESH

Sheikh Salahuddin was a saint of the Suhrawardia order, and lived in the early fourteenth century, around the same time as Nasiruddin Mahmud Chiragh-e-Dehli. Sheikh Salahuddin’s Tomb, built in AD 1340, lies well north of Chiragh-e-Dehli’s and is far less popular than his contemporary’s, but it is still important.

A stone *chhajja* or dripstone, now broken in places, once ran all the way round below the dome. Another feature of Sheikh Salahuddin’s Tomb that has vanished would have been the red sandstone *jalis* (carved screens) that once linked the twelve pillars.

