

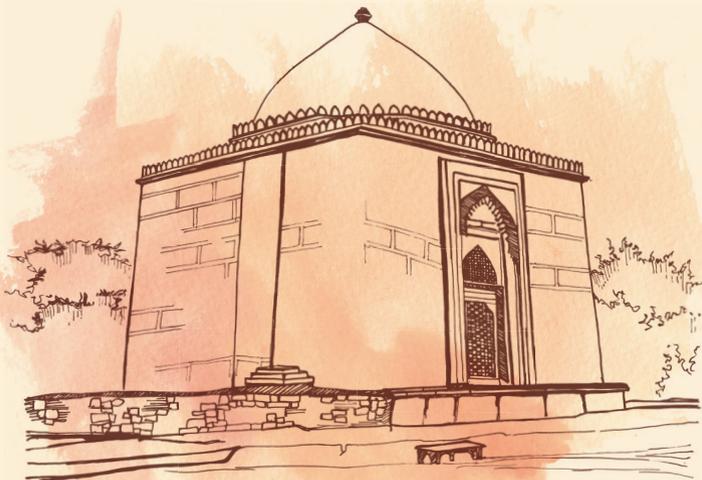
3. SARAI SHAHJI MAHAL

The Sarai Shahji Mahal is best approached from the main Geetanjali Road that cuts through Malviya Nagar rather than from the Begumpur village. The mahal (palace) and many surrounding buildings were part of the Sarai Shahji village as a place for travellers to stay. Of the two Mughal buildings, the first is a rectangular building with a large courtyard in the centre that houses several graves. Towards the west, is a three-bay *dalan* (colonnaded verandah) with pyramidal roofs, which was once a mosque.

The other building is a slightly more elaborate apartment in the form of a tower. The single room is entered through a set of three doorways set within a large arch. The noticeable feature here is a balcony-like projection over the doorway which is supported by carved red sandstone brackets.

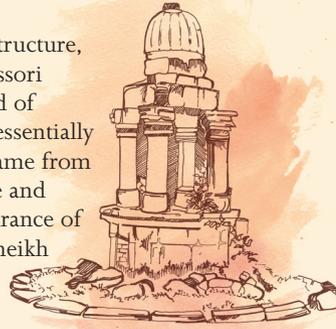
4. LAL GUMBAD

Located on the main Malviya Nagar Road, it is impossible to miss the park that contains a group of buildings dominated by the distinctive looking Lal Gumbad. The buildings here include ruins of five wall mosques (belonging to the Lodi period), private grave platforms, and gateways. The main building here (commonly known as Lal Gumbad) is the Tomb of Sheikh Kabir-ud-din Auliya (AD 1397) who was a disciple of Sufi saint Roshan Chiragh-e-Dehli. Externally the tomb has a pronounced batter to the walls that are covered with strips of dressed red sandstone. On the roof, a low octagonal drum carries a conical dome which was originally surmounted with a gold finial, which must have been stolen. The main access to the interior of the tomb is from its east. Here a tall, pointed entrance arch with a lotus bud fringe design contains a carved corbelled gateway surrounded by a band of white marble.



5. KHARBUZE KA GUMBAD

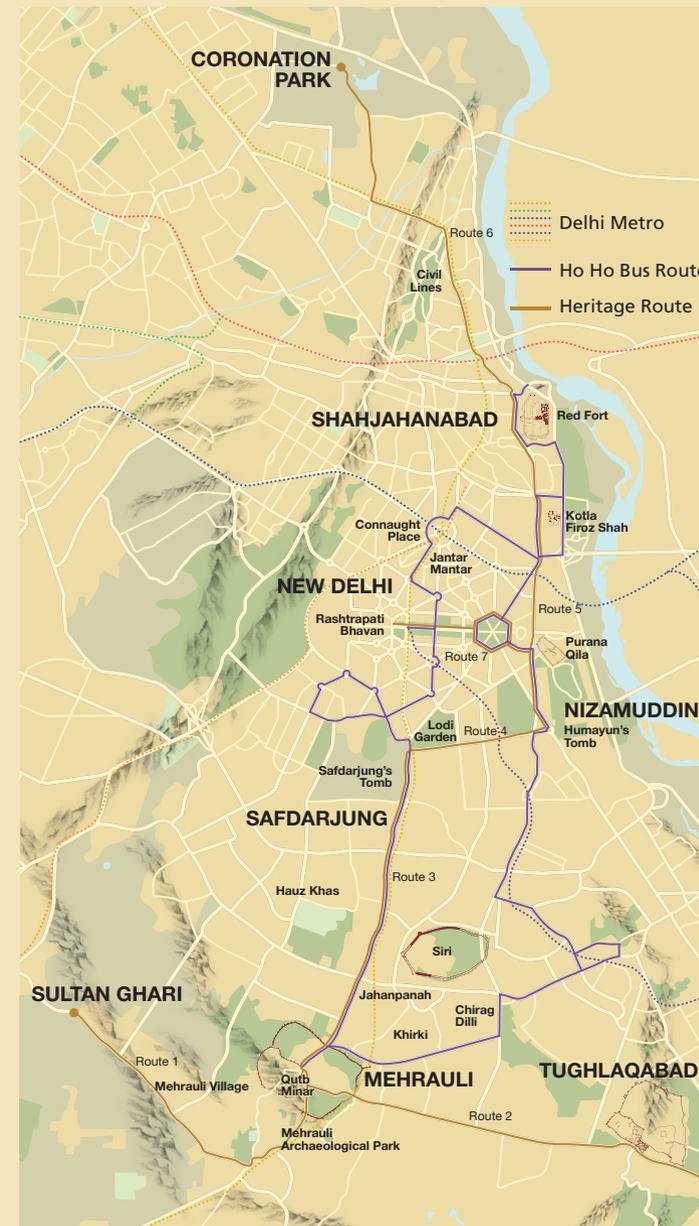
This is an interesting, yet bizarre little structure, located within the premises of a Montessori school in the residential neighbourhood of Sadhana Enclave in Malviya Nagar. It is essentially a small pavilion structure and gets its name from the tiny dome, carved out of solid stone and placed at its very top, that has the appearance of a half-sliced melon. It is believed that Sheikh Kabir-ud-din Auliya, buried in the Lal Gumbad spent his days under this dome and the night in the cave located below it. The building has been dated to the late fourteenth century and considering its size, it is quite surprising that it has survived.



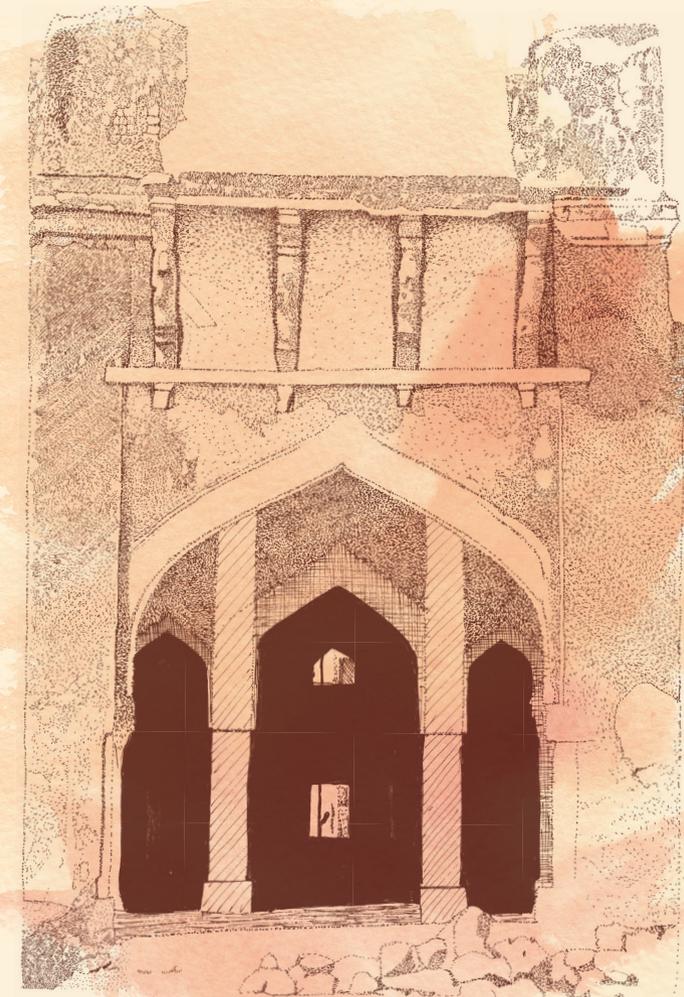
6. BARADARI AND TOMB

These two buildings are located in Sadhana Enclave and can be approached from the Ring Road. As one approaches from the main road, the building on the right is the Baradari. It comprises of a seven-bay wide and three-bay deep open pavilion whose original use is unknown. Some scholars suggest that this could have been a mosque but very little remains of the western wall to conclusively prove this. The building belongs to the Tughlaq period and probably dates to the late fourteenth century. The front row is made of double columns and a *chhajja* (dripstone), supported by small brackets that runs across the entire front above the arched openings.

The tomb across this building is a Lodi-era structure of a very simple design. There are arched entrances into the tomb from all sides except the west which contains the *mihrab* (niche in the wall showing the direction of prayer). The dome above the tomb is raised on an unusually tall octagonal drum surrounded by battlement designs. The tomb is known to have stood in its own enclosure wall which has now disappeared.



a walk around JAHANPANAH



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1. BEGUMPURI MOSQUE

Begumpuri Mosque is historically one of the most important surviving remnants of the Tughlaq-era architecture. Raised above the surrounding ground level, the structure stands in complete contrast to the surrounding Begumpur village.

The date of its construction is much debated. While some believe that it was the main mosque of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's newly founded city of Jahanpanah, other scholars maintain that the mosque was built slightly later, in about mid-fourteenth century, and is one of the seven great mosques built by Firoz Shah's Prime Minister Khan Jahan Junan Shah. Ibn Battuta, the famous Moroccan traveller who noted in detail the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq fails to mention it in his writings. The building continued to be used as a mosque well until the seventeenth century, at which point, increasing anarchy led many of Jahanpanah's residents to either escape to Shahjahanabad or take shelter even within the mosque itself.

A flight of steps leading to a domed gateway opens into a large courtyard within the mosque. The courtyard is surrounded on all sides with colonnaded arcades that have square-domed chambers in their centres. Originally these domes (now a weathered black colour, as the rest of the mosque structure) must have been covered in lime plaster and paint, creating quite a spectacular sight. As with all mosques, to the west of the courtyard is the prayer hall. The large central chamber of the prayer hall is entered through an unusually tall gateway. This elegantly proportioned structure has tapering minarets on both its visible corners, and is the most prominent feature of the mosque. South of this gateway is a narrow winding staircase that takes you to the top of the structure from where one can get a fantastic view of the village and open space around, and the city beyond.

Jahanpanah—literally, 'Refuge of the World'—also called the fourth city of Delhi, was established in AD 1326 by the second Tughlaq sultan, Muhammad bin Tughlaq. It was created by linking the scattered urban settlements of the older cities of Siri and Lal Kot by extensive walls with thirteen gates. Historians believe that the fortified city set aside for the sultan and his royal household contained the citadel with the sultan's palace complex and the main mosque, while the majority of city's population continued to live within the walls of Lal Kot.

Today, very little survives of what can be dated to Muhammad bin Tughlaq's reign other than small sections of the fortifications, mostly parts that connected Siri to Lal Kot from the south. The elegant and impressive Begumpuri Mosque, located within the Begumpur village, was perhaps the main mosque of Jahanpanah. Nearby, the Bijay Mandal group of buildings would have been part of the royal residence. Not far from the Begumpuri Mosque, in the village of Sarai Shahji, the Sarai Shahji Mahal was an inn with an attached mosque dating from the Mughal period. Further still, the late-fourteenth century Lal Gumbad, and the tiny fascinating Kharbuze ka Gumbad are associated with saint Kabir-ud-din Auliya who is buried here. Numerous other ruins including tombs, mosques, and gateways lie hidden away in the lanes and by lanes of Malviya Nagar, Shivalik, and Greater Kailash that originally came under the old city of Jahanpanah.



2. BIJAY MANDAL COMPLEX AND THE DOMED BUILDING

Not far from the Begumpuri Mosque, are located the ruins of the building complex of Bijay Mandal, or 'Victory Pavilion'. This is perhaps the only building within Jahanpanah, of which some parts are definitely associated with the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. As is the case with many other buildings of this era, this lofty complex has also been built over several centuries and therefore its history and structure are quite difficult to understand at first. This was the site of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's palace, the Hazar Sutun, known as the 'Thousand-pillared Palace'.

The main structure of the palace, built in wood, was an audience hall referred to as Hazar Sutun. The interior of this palace was very grand, decorated with paintings and an exquisitely carved wooden ceiling. Unfortunately, no remains of this wooden structure survive today. What survives, is the stone masonry buildings that must have surrounded this wooden structure. The building in stone is built on two successive platforms. As you approach, you see a high solid wall on the west side of the upper platform, with a domed building on its left. The higher platform might have been built first, during the Khalji period. On top of this platform are the remains of a hypostyle hall that leads into a space that must have been the living quarters. Stepping down a few steps into the apartments behind, one cannot miss two large pits towards the west. These are in fact treasure pits excavated in the early twentieth century, in which many precious objects were found, indicating that these were indeed royal apartments.

An additional solid platform was built directly behind this set of early buildings, perhaps during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq along with an octagonal pavilion built on top of its base.

There is also a later building, dating from the Lodi period. Conspicuous due to its curious form and large dome, the exact purpose for the construction of the domed building is not known. It was perhaps built to house Sheikh Hasan Tahir, a holy saint who lived here during the reign of Sikandar Lodi. From this building one can see the massive expanse of the lower platform that was built during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq.