

## 5. TURRET

Historians have reason to believe that this turret is perhaps the oldest structure in this ensemble of tombs and mosques. This 6 m high turret was probably the corner tower of an enclosure that has completely disappeared over time. Built in rubble masonry the turret leaves visitors wondering about the purpose of the building.



## 6. WALL MOSQUE AND GATEWAY

This small complex built during the late Mughal period, comprises of a tri-arched entrance gateway and a small mosque enclosed within a walled garden. The four walls of the garden, though broken at various places, still remain.

The double-storied gateway is finely plastered over Lakhori brick masonry and topped with a brick vaulted *Bangaldar* (Bengal style) roof. The east façade has three bays of cusped arches, while the central bay is the doorway, that leads to the enclosed garden beyond.

The single-chambered mosque, rectangular in plan, is crowned with three brick domes with a large central

dome and two smaller ones on either side. The entrance façade has three bays of pointed arches with the higher central arch projecting out. Inside the mosque, the western wall has three arched *mihrabs*. There is evidence of ornate designs painted on the inner walls and the outer walls are made of plastered Lakhori brick with patterned openings that are a distinct characteristic of Mughal construction.

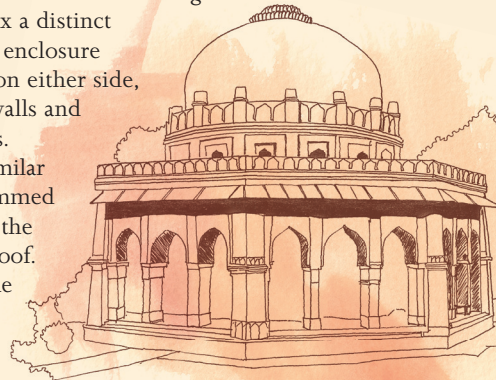


## 7. TOMB OF SIKANDAR LODI

Sikandar Lodi, (r. AD 1489–1517) is known to be the second and the most significant ruler of the dynasty. His tomb set in a square garden, enclosed within high walls looks like a little fortress. The tomb is entered through an elaborate gateway, with a raised forecourt on the south where two standing *chhatris* give the complex a distinct appearance. The walled enclosure measures nearly 75 m on either side, with high battlement walls and recessed internal arches.

The tomb is quite similar in appearance to Muhammed Shah's Tomb, except for the missing *chhatris* on the roof. The upper portion of the dome is decorated with a distinct pattern in plaster and the corners take the shape of a pillar which then rises to form circular minarets.

The inner chamber of the tomb is surrounded by a lovely verandah of arches with carved sandstone brackets. Seven openings lead into the inner space where the tomb inside retains some beautifully designed glazed tile decorations, painted stucco-work, and a single grave.



## 8. ATHPULA

One of the most fascinating structures of the garden complex is this sixteenth-century Mughal construction to the east of Sikandar Lodi's Tomb. The picturesque eight-pier bridge was built during Akbar's reign by Nawab Bahadur, to span a tributary of the Yamuna that probably met up with the Barahpula nullah further south. This was a part of the river system that drained the south Delhi area and then fed the River Yamuna. The present name 'Athpula', is derived from the *ath* (eight) piers made of irregular courses of dressed stones, that support the arches of the bridge.



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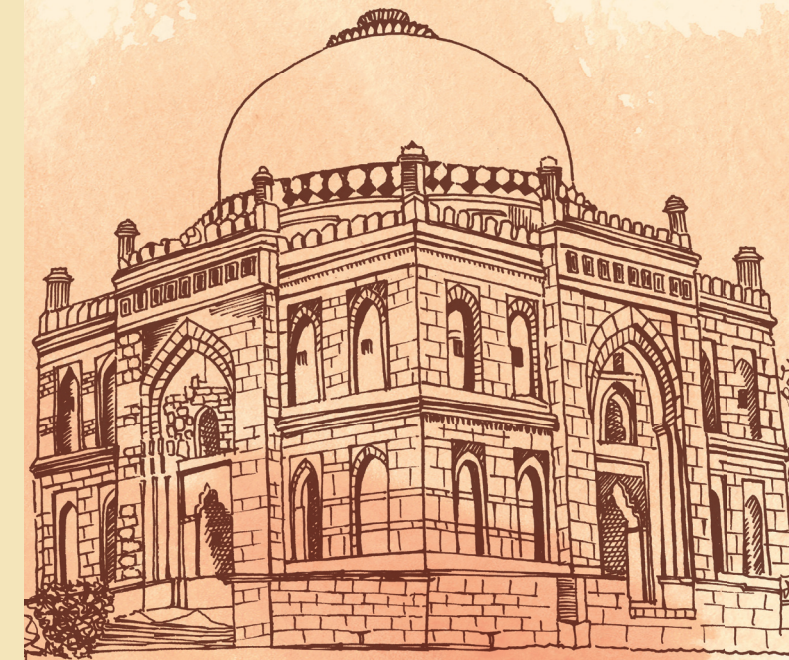
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INTACH

Delhi Chapter

# a walk around LODI GARDEN





## 1. TOMB OF MUHAMMED SHAH SAYYID

The only Sayyid building in the Lodi Garden is the tomb of Muhammed Shah Sayyid. After the ruler's death in AD 1451, the tomb was built by his son Alauddin Alam Shah.

This handsome building constructed of Delhi quartzite stone, stands on a high platform. An arched verandah surrounds the central octagonal chamber which is nearly 15m wide, in the middle of which lies the cenotaph of Muhammed Shah surrounded by several other graves. Each side of the inner chamber has a beam-and-lintel doorway which originally had perforated screens, with the main entrance to the chamber from the south.

The dome of the building is large (10m in diameter), gracefully proportioned, and raised on an octagonal wall that supports the dome above. A cluster of small chattris (raised, domed, pavilions) surround the main dome which is crowned with an inverted lotus finial. The four openings serve as arched windows in stone open work and over them are

bands of inscription and other decorative motifs. The soffit of the dome above is ornamented with incised stucco plasterwork. The plaster was carved with patterns and inscriptions from the Quran. After drying, the plaster was painted with many colours, creating a befitting resting place for the king.

A few distinctive features including corner buttresses, decorative plaster finish, corbelled doorways, and a cluster of small octagonal chhatris around the main dome give the tomb a distinct Indo-Islamic appearance, narrating a blend in architectural features through the passage of time.

## 2. MOSQUE IN HERBAL GARDEN

This small eighteenth-century mosque, very close to the herbal garden, was built by the Mughals. The mosque, recently restored, appears to have been inside an enclosure that has disappeared over time.

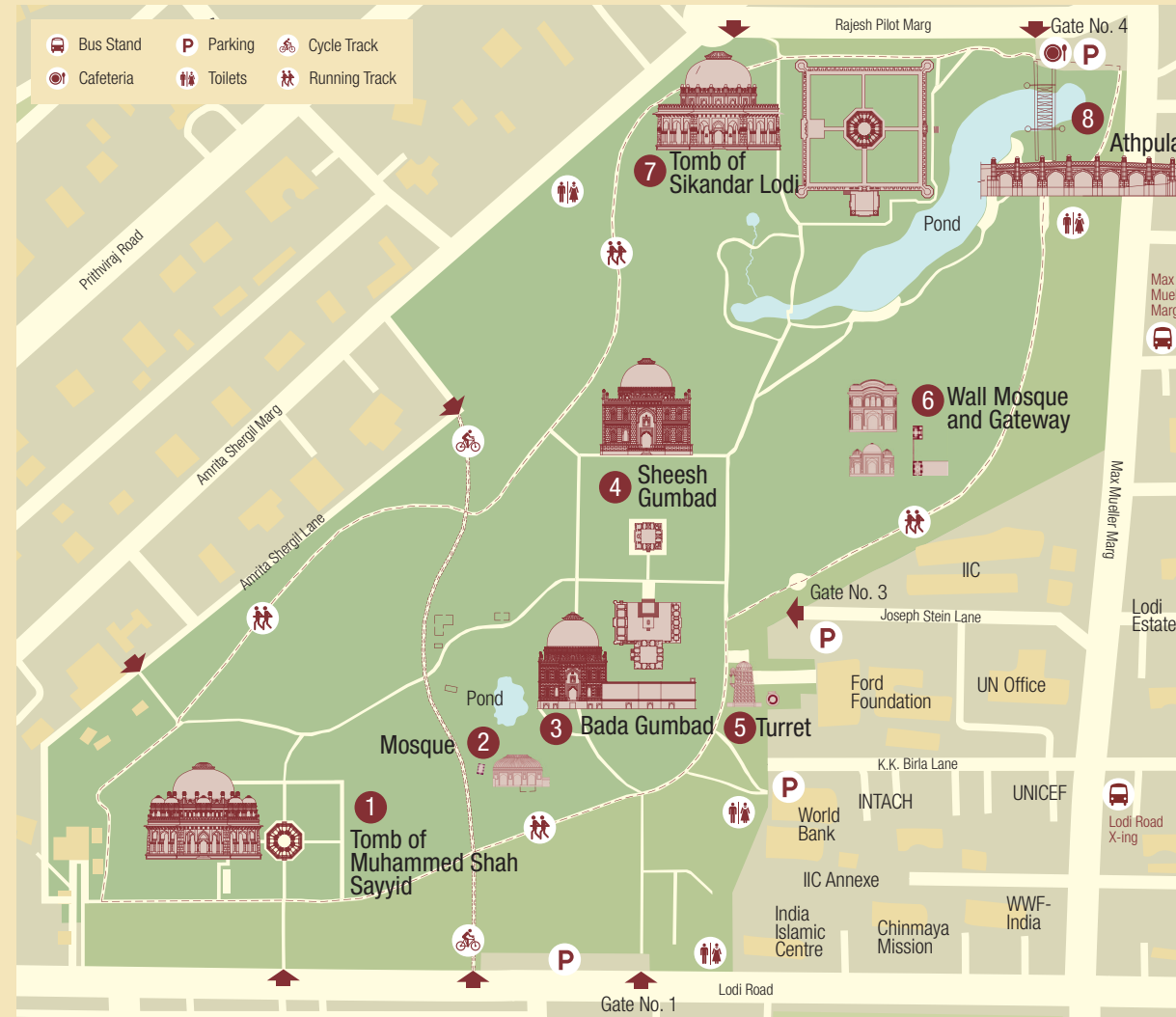
Constructed of random rubble masonry and then finely plastered over, this little mosque is crowned with a brick vaulted roof with ribbed patterns. Three equal-sized, pointed-arched openings on the eastern façade and single arched openings on the north and the south façade, give access to the interior of the single chambered mosque. The inner chamber measuring approximately 6m x 4m has three arches on the western wall which serve as the mihrab, indicating the direction of prayer.



Lodi Garden, once called Bagh-i-Jud, was the royal burial ground for the Sayyid and Lodi rulers of Delhi. Located on Lodi Road between Safdurjung's Tomb and Khan Market in south Delhi, the garden covers an area of approximately 90 acres, dotted with beautiful monuments and tombs. With its undulating walking paths and jogging tracks fringed with ancient trees, colourful shrubs and flowering plants, the garden is an amalgamation of a historic past encompassed within today's Delhi.

The garden, as we see it now, in its avatar as a landscaped park, was designed in 1936 as a setting for the group of buildings belonging to the Sayyid, Lodi, and Mughal dynasties. These tombs, mosques, and other structures stood in what was then called the village of Khairpur, on the outskirts of New Delhi. In 1936, a garden was laid out with native and exotic trees and plants around these monuments. It was named Lady Willingdon Park, after the wife of the then British Viceroy. Post-Independence, it was more appropriately renamed Lodi Garden when it was redesigned in 1968 by J.A. Stein, an eminent architect, who is also associated with many other buildings around the Lodi Garden Complex.

Timings: 5.00 am–8.00 pm (summer), 6.00 am–8.00 pm (winter). Entry: Free



## 3. BADA GUMBAD

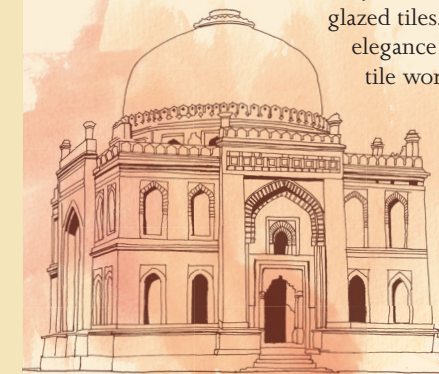
This imposing building which is believed to be a gateway because of the absence of any grave, dates back to the Lodi Dynasty (AD 1451–1526). The name literally means the building with a big (bada) dome (gumbad). Rising up to approximately 27 m and measuring 19 m x 19 m, this square structure is one of the biggest and the finest examples of the Lodi period monuments in Delhi.

When seen from outside, the structure appears to have two storeys. However, when you enter you will see that it has a single chamber with a magnificent high ceiling. The doorways are corbelled and beautifully carved. The decoration of the building is minimal with the pale grey granite relieved by pink sandstone and grey-black highlights.

Adorning this building on the west side is a mosque with a pavilion to the east. This mosque measuring 25 m x 6.5 m, though small, is remarkably beautiful. It has five arched openings with spectacular stucco work of floral motifs and geometric designs. The arches lead into a rectangular prayer hall that has Quranic inscriptions on the walls and decorated ceilings.

## 4. SHEESH GUMBAD

This building is called the Sheesh Gumbad or 'Glass Dome'. The dome and parts of the façade were once completely covered with coloured glazed tiles. You can see remnants of its former elegance and glory in the turquoise and cobalt blue tile work on the façade.



This square building and the central cenotaph room are beautifully decorated with painted incised stucco-work of floral patterns and Quranic inscriptions. The central tomb chamber has several graves, presumably of eminent people of Sikandar Lodi's time. Unlike the Bara Gumbad this building does not have a separate mosque; the mihrab is placed on the inner western wall.