

# CORONATION PARK

and Mughal Gardens in North Delhi



दिल्ली विरासत  
DELHI HERITAGE



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Few visitors today venture into this area of Delhi, tucked away in the north of the walled city of Shahjahanabad, a little removed from the more popular tourist attractions of Red Fort and Chandni Chowk. Although the area contains few remains from the earlier Sultanate period, it was actively in use during the Mughal period, being the recreational area for the Mughal royalty and nobility. The earliest building from this period in the area is a tomb known as Maqbara

Paik, the name of which suggests that it was built for an important messenger of the Mughal court.

Several great gardens were built in north Delhi and some of these still exist, blending harmoniously with later residential and commercial developments. Shalimar Bagh, a pleasure garden built during Shahjahan's reign, particularly well-known because it was where Aurangzeb was crowned emperor, contains ruins of pavilions and fountains. Roshanara, Shahjahan's second daughter also chose this area to build her garden and residence and was eventually buried inside a pavilion she commissioned within the garden, now known as Roshanara Bagh. An ancient canal dug during the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq was repaired by Ali Mardan Khan, a nobleman in Shahjahan's court, to bring water to the gardens and orchards of Shahjahanabad, that had come up adjacent to the canal.

In 1793, a British traveller to Delhi named Franklin described the area as being crowded with spacious gardens and country houses. The area continued to be popular with the later Mughals, and Mahaldar Khan, an important official in the court of Muhammed Shah 'Rangeela',

constructed the unusual Tripolia Gateways enclosing a marketplace and his own residential estate between them. The British, when they came to Delhi in 1803, also concentrated their activities here, occupying some of the gardens and converting them into pleasure retreats and setting up a military cantonment that was to become the site for the three successive Imperial Durbars of 1877, 1903, and 1911. The British Empire was at its zenith at the beginning of the twentieth century when it was decided, for political and pragmatic reasons, to move the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. At the Durbar held in 1911, the announcement of shifting the capital of British India from Calcutta to Delhi was made by King George V.

All this time, this area was used only as a military camp, but considerable changes took place in this area after the announcement that Delhi was going to be made the capital. A commemorative column, erected in 1911 at this spot, stands till today as a reminder of this major event. It is within what is today called the Coronation Park. A foundation stone was laid at this location for a new Imperial capital but the site was later abandoned because it was found to flood during the monsoons. The new capital that was proposed was to be the 'jewel in the crown' of the British Empire and took almost twenty years to be built.

Today, many of the historical sites in and around Coronation Park lie hidden and much remains to be discovered about this intriguing and fascinating area!

## DELHI DURBARS

"We are pleased to announce to Our People that on the advice of Our Ministers tendered after consultation with Our Governor-General in Council, We have decided upon the transfer of the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to the ancient Capital Delhi...."

These were the words uttered by King George V, to his subjects in Delhi, on 12 December 1911, which changed forever the fate of the city. This sensational surprise was significant for two reasons: one that there was no previous indication given to the general public that such an announcement would be made but more importantly because it meant that Delhi from then on became the capital of the empire, replacing Calcutta which till then was the pulsating, nerve centre and then finally became the capital of an independent nation. This announcement was made at the third Imperial Durbar of 1911, the grandest of the three Durbars to be held in Delhi. The Imperial Durbars in Delhi, showcasing the prowess of the British, celebrated the coronations of the ruler in England, as the emperor or empress of India. They were really an 'invented tradition' and a means of perpetuating a tradition of previous Hindu, Muslim, and Mughal rulers.

The first Durbar was conceived and executed by the then Viceroy of India, Lord Lytton (1831–1891). It was held on 1 January 1877 to mark the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India. The Durbar was attended by representatives of the royal families from all provinces of India and the seniormost

British dignitaries. It is said that the Durbar was an extravaganza of pomp and ceremony and included a parade on a decorated elephant, in the presence of about 70,000 people, by Lord and Lady Lytton. The ultimate idea of the procession of the royal Durbar was to represent the British Raj as bringing 'order and discipline, which was in ideology part of the whole system of colonial control'.

The second Durbar was organized by Lord Curzon who was the then Viceroy of India, and was held on 1 January 1903. The reason for the celebration was to commemorate the Coronation of King Edward VII in England. Like the previous Durbar, this one was also an exercise in meticulous planning and a great show of the pomp and splendour of the British Raj. For the purpose of the Durbar, the vast flat land of the Coronation Park was turned into a virtual tented city by Lord Curzon who established huge encampments filled with colourful tents. A variety of infrastructure including water, drainage, sanitation, electricity, and rail communications was supplied to the venue from different locations in the nearby city. Firework displays, exhibitions, and glamorous dances were organized. Special postage stamps were issued on the occasion. Post offices, telegraph, and telephone communications were provided. The elite of the world media were present, but the intended chief guest, the King-Emperor himself, did not attend the celebrations held in his honour. Instead, he was represented by his brother, the Duke of Connaught and Strathearn. It is



A temporary but elaborate city came up north of the ridge to accommodate the Durbar of 1911

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The British King and Queen in Delhi on the occasion of the Coronation Durbar of 1911/12

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celebrate the coronation of King George V, as the Emperor of the British Empire. A temporary but elaborate city came up to accommodate the Durbar. A sprawling area of around 80 square miles, from Civil Lines in the north to Model Town in the west was cleared of villages and an assembly of tents was proposed over an area of 25 square miles. The king's camp was to be located at the centre of the camp spreading over 85 acres. The camps of officials and Indian princess were all positioned in an order of hierarchy. Apart from the rulers of various princely states, those staying in the camps included guests who had been specially invited for the occasion, journalists, the servants of both British and native dignitaries, and the elephants and horses that formed part of the processions. The arrangement, and size, of the camps and the sitting plan of the maharajas in the amphitheatre were decided by a hierarchical scale and by the number of gun salutes that each received.

Preparations started a year in advance. As the Durbar was planned over on a large area, the prevalent infrastructure at the site was also upgraded. The area was connected by its own railway. Nearly 60 miles of roads were constructed, and 40 miles of railway lines were put down, with 24 new rail stations constructed. The electricity provided to the Durbar camps was according to Viceroy Lord Hardinge, enough to light up whole towns in England. For the daily needs of the camps, farms, markets, and dairies were established. Eighty kilometres of water mains were also added.

A Durbar of this scale involved extensive expenditure. A sum of 6,00,000 pounds was approved for the Durbar and maintenance of the visiting local rulers. An additional 3,00,000 pounds were

also said that more than 1,00,000 people attended this Durbar at Coronation Park. The 1903 Durbar procession passed along the Red Fort and through the city, around the Jama Masjid and past Town Hall. Viceroy Curzon rode into the Durbar on a richly caparisoned elephant.

The third Imperial Durbar was held in 1911 at the same venue as the two previous ones, to

supplied by the Government of India to pay for the 80,000 army troops in the parades and security for the event. The most significant construction for the Durbar was the amphitheatre, the site for the coronation ceremony. Around this the government built polo grounds, football grounds, and grounds for military reviews. These were used for several events that were organized around the coronation ceremony—sporting events, military reviews, musical performances, banquets, receptions, and garden parties.

This was the grandest of the three Durbars. Interestingly enough, the first two Durbars lacked the presence of the monarchs themselves, the respective viceroys at the time reading out the 1858 proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India, and declaring the current monarch as empress and emperor, in 1877 and 1903, respectively. At the 1911 Durbar, for the first time, King George V and his queen attended the Durbar in person, making the long and tiresome journey from Britain to India. The royal couple came into Delhi on 7th December, on an imperial train from Bombay, and wound their way through the city in a procession that lasted almost five hours.

The Durbars were a mix of old Mughal ceremony and English appropriation. The new Durbars, for instance, continued the old exchange of gifts but now for different reasons. One aspect of the Durbars that was common to both English and native traditions were the processions that wound their way through Delhi.

Five days later, on the chilly clear morning of 12 December 1911 some 1,00,000 spectators witnessed the biggest spectacle of the British Raj. Many subjects had gathered at the grounds near Burari to watch this drama unfold. The amphitheatre especially built for the occasion had 12,000 persons seated beneath the

The Durbar session of 1911

© Nehru Archives, Teen Murti Bhavan



canopy while 70,000 less privileged beings watched this spectacle from a huge semi-circular mound.

The ceremony itself was a grand affair attended by Indians, princes, officials, British officers, and soldiers. Despite the fact that preparations started a year ahead, the last few nails were driven into the red carpet moments before the Viceroy's escort rode up. A flourish of trumpets and drums followed and King George V rode in on a horse. The ceremony proceeded with customary rituals like kneeling, accompanied by bowing before the king, along with the kissing of 'His Majesty's' hand – by Lord Hardinge and his Council members, by the Indian heads of State and princes, and other important dignitaries present.

Somewhere towards the end of the ceremony, Viceroy Lord Hardinge announced the boons conferred in commemoration of the accession of George V and he then handed over a document to the king. The king read out a statement proclaiming the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi, the reunion of eastern and western Bengal and other, not so significant, administrative changes.

This pronouncement of Delhi as the capital of British India at the end of Imperial Durbar of 1911, took the assemblage by surprise. With no prior announcement about the shift of capital from Calcutta, it came as a bolt out of the blue for the gathered princes and onlookers. This most important proclamation made by the king and queen, paved the way for New Delhi, built to the south-west of Shahjahanabad which was the last Mughal city of Delhi.

Reasons put forth were better administration and prosperity, a move motivated perhaps by the need to get away from the turbulent climate and political instability of the former capital, Calcutta. This need to establish a new capital city emulated the practice followed by earlier Sultanate and Mughal rulers who had established their own cities in Delhi, a move meant to improve the British Imperial image.

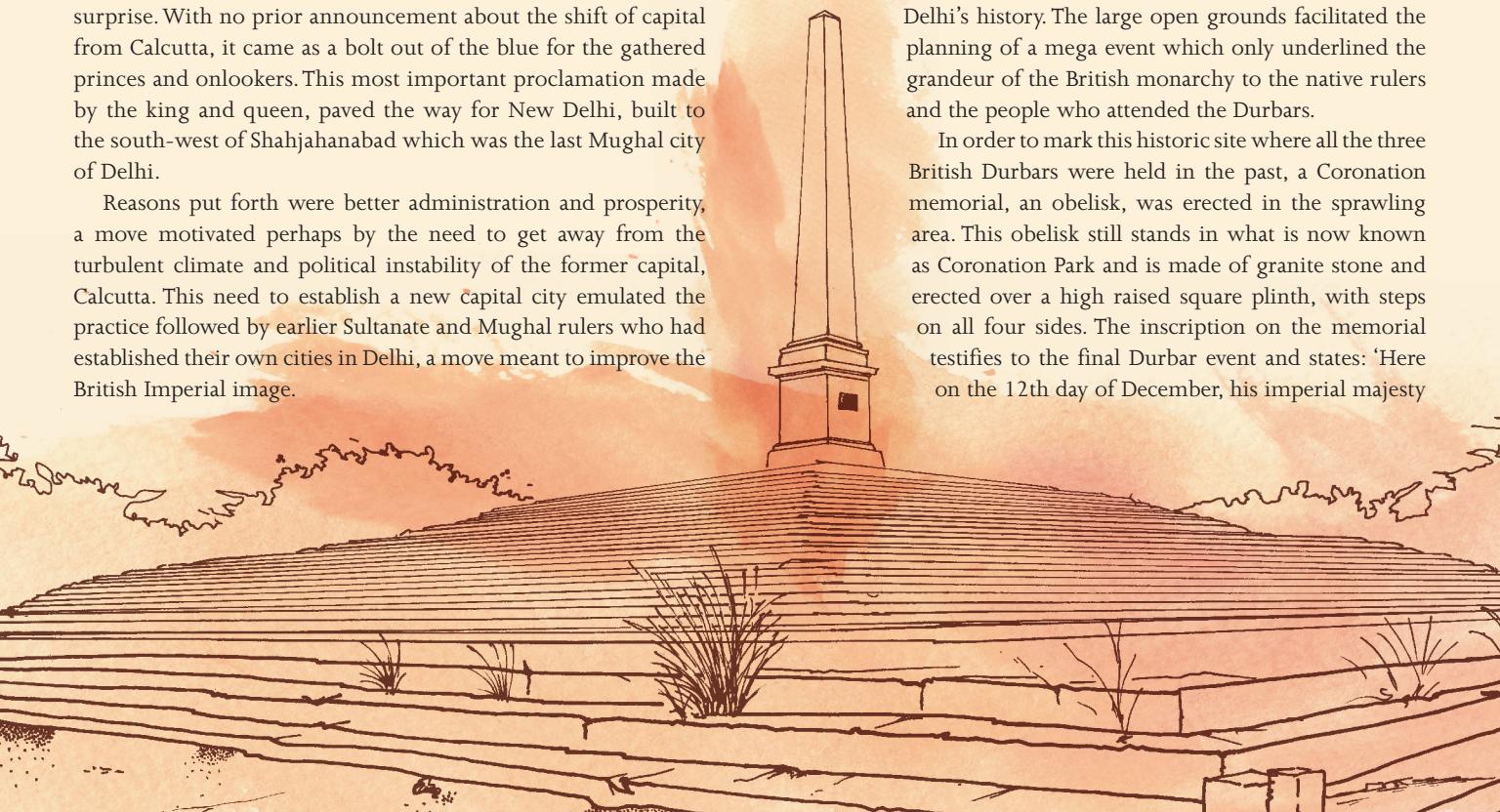
## 1. CORONATION PARK

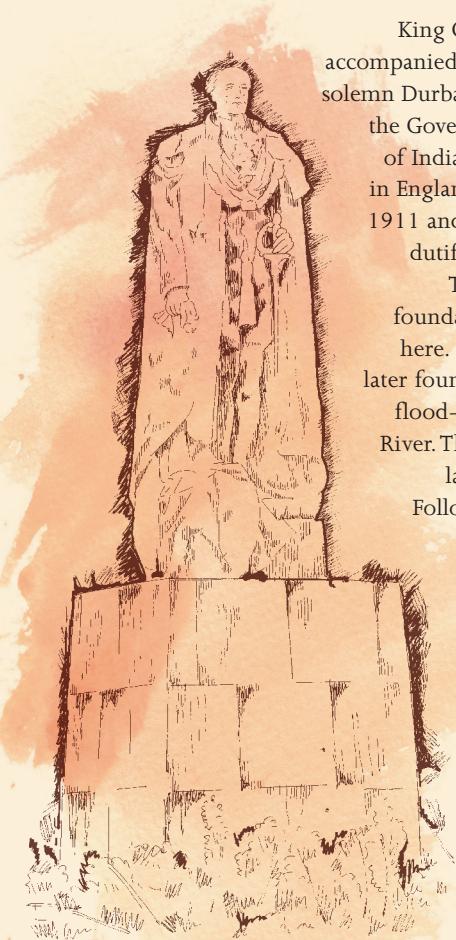
Coronation Park, located on the Burari Road, is perhaps the northernmost historical site associated with Delhi. This was the site where three Imperial Durbars were held—the first Durbar in 1877 had been witness to a proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India. Again in 1903, a Durbar at this location celebrated the coronation of Edward VII as Emperor of India and the third Durbar of 1911 to celebrate the coronation of King George V, was unique because of the presence of George V himself, and Queen Mary. The Durbar of 1911 has gone down in history as the most important of all the Durbars because it was here that an announcement was made that the capital of British India would be moved from Calcutta to Delhi.

Inspite of Calcutta being the capital of British India, Delhi was chosen as the site for the Durbars because the city boasted a historical legacy of royal ceremonies. It had been the capital of several previous dynasties and was thus considered an important place from the Imperial perspective. The decision to hold the Coronation Durbars in Delhi, at the vast open ground at

Coronation Park was a move to emphasize this facet of Delhi's history. The large open grounds facilitated the planning of a mega event which only underlined the grandeur of the British monarchy to the native rulers and the people who attended the Durbars.

In order to mark this historic site where all the three British Durbars were held in the past, a Coronation memorial, an obelisk, was erected in the sprawling area. This obelisk still stands in what is now known as Coronation Park and is made of granite stone and erected over a high raised square plinth, with steps on all four sides. The inscription on the memorial testifies to the final Durbar event and states: 'Here on the 12th day of December, his imperial majesty





King George V, Emperor of India accompanied by the Queen Empress, in solemn Durbar, announced in person to the Governors, princes and peoples of India his coronation celebrated in England on the 12th day of June 1911 and received from them their dutiful homage and allegiance.'

The monarchs also laid the foundation stones for a new city here. However, the location was later found unsuitable, being in the flood-prone zone of the Yamuna River. The foundation stones were later shifted to Raisina Hill.

Following the independence of India on 15 August 1947, the park became the final resting place for some of the statues of former British kings, governors, and officials of the British Raj. The statues, which were once dotted around New Delhi were moved here from their original locations onto specially designed red sandstone pedestals, in an enclosure

just opposite the obelisk. The largest and tallest of these is a 15 m (49 ft) high marble statue of King George V designed by Charles Sargeant Jagger. This statue, which adorns a lofty pedestal, has the British royal coat of arms and George V's name engraved at its base. It had earlier stood atop a canopy in front of the India Gate, but was later moved here as its placement in the centre of the capital of an independent nation that had just freed itself of the shackles of imperial rule was considered inappropriate. The rest of the statues, those of Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, viceroys Lord Willingdon and Lord Hardinge are arranged in a semi-circle, with the statue of George V in the centre.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free

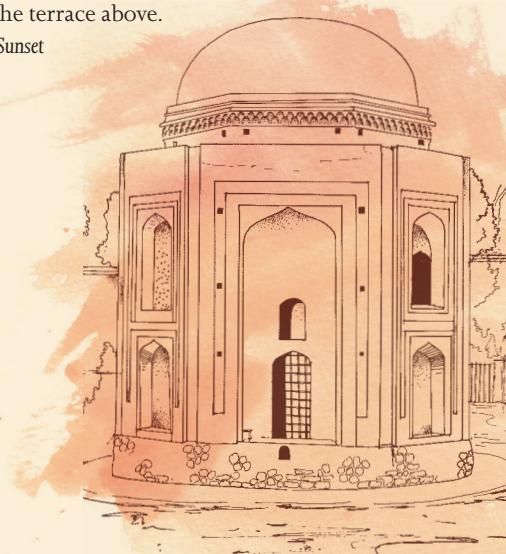
## 2. MAQBARA PAIK

In a city dotted with tombs associated with both known and forgotten rulers and courtiers, Maqbara Paik, literally meaning the messenger's mausoleum, is probably the most remote, lying towards the northernmost edge of the city. The word paik also refers to a foot soldier in the Mughal army. The identity of the paik buried here may be unknown but he was surely important enough to have a tomb constructed for him and that too, at a strategic location. The tomb is close to the historic Wazirabad Bridge that Firoz Shah Tughlaq built on the Yamuna in the fourteenth century. Going by its organizational plan and architectural features, it looks like an early Mughal tomb constructed in the sixteenth century in the Baghdaid octagonal tomb style (an unevenly sided octagon, the longer side of which often projects forward slightly as if they were a pishtaq [the square façade that surrounds an iwan or doorway]). The internal plan has square corners and the corner arches are effectively squinches, springing from the floor. Some scholars suggest that it belongs to the Lodi era.

The base of the tomb is made of rubble stone masonry that hides an underground crypt chamber. The tomb itself is an unusually tall structure with the appearance of a two-storey building. It is constructed of Lakhori brick-work with a lime plaster finish. It is surmounted by a flat, egg-shaped dome without a finial which rises from an octagonal drum, under which there are two courses of projecting squinches. Externally, the tomb consists of recessed arches on each of its eight sides; those on the four cardinal points have arched openings. There are four slender staircases within the wall along the arched entrances which lead to the terrace above.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free



## GARDENS BUILT BY THE MUGHALS

From ancient times Indians have been partial to gardens in the form of orchards, not only for their abundant produce of fruit and flowers but also because they provided a much-needed respite from the scorching summer heat, with their shade trees and pleasant micro-climate. The Mughals, when they first arrived in India greatly missed the formal gardens of their homeland and almost immediately, started to lay out gardens similar to the ones in Central Asia. Babur, the first Mughal emperor is known to have been very displeased with the lack of gardens and flowing water in Hindustan and set himself to establish many gardens in the Indian cities of Delhi, Agra, and Lahore.

The later Mughals lent a completely new dimension and identity to these gardens by reshaping them into pleasure resorts—laid out with carefully chosen fruiting, flowering, and shade-providing plants; and usually incorporating water features like pools, channels, and fountains. At their zenith, these Mughal gardens developed into elaborately laid out walled enclosures containing many important buildings like pavilions and mosques. These formal four-part gardens, sometimes referred to as *char bagh*, had a formal, symmetrical design and abundant water flowing through channels and pools. In addition to the water courses there was a variety of trees of which the cypress and fruit trees had a special significance. The cypress symbolized death and therefore eternity, and the fruit trees especially mango, plum, almond represented life and hope. Usually these gardens were established near the rivers to ensure water supply. The *char bagh* typology of gardens was inaugurated with the creation of gardens surrounding Humayun's Tomb in Delhi.

The founding of Shahjahanabad, and the advent of building activity under royal patronage gave a massive impetus to garden building in Delhi. Since Shahjahan was a pious man, the concept of gardens in Shahjahanabad was influenced by the Quranic tradition which perceives paradise itself as a garden. In keeping with this tradition, plots of land were allotted to important members of the royalty and nobility to lay out gardens and build religious structures such as mosques. While there was no dearth of gardens and pleasure pavilions within Shahjahan's fort, gardens such as the Anguri Bagh, Buland Bagh, and the Gulabi Bagh also surrounded the fort on all sides. However, the most artistic garden in Shahjahanabad was the vast garden created by Jahanara, the daughter of Shahjahan, in AD 1650, north of Chandni Chowk called Bagh-e-Sahibabad for use by the women and children of the Imperial household. The garden covered about 50 acres and comprised canals, waterfalls, fountains, pools, flowers, trees,

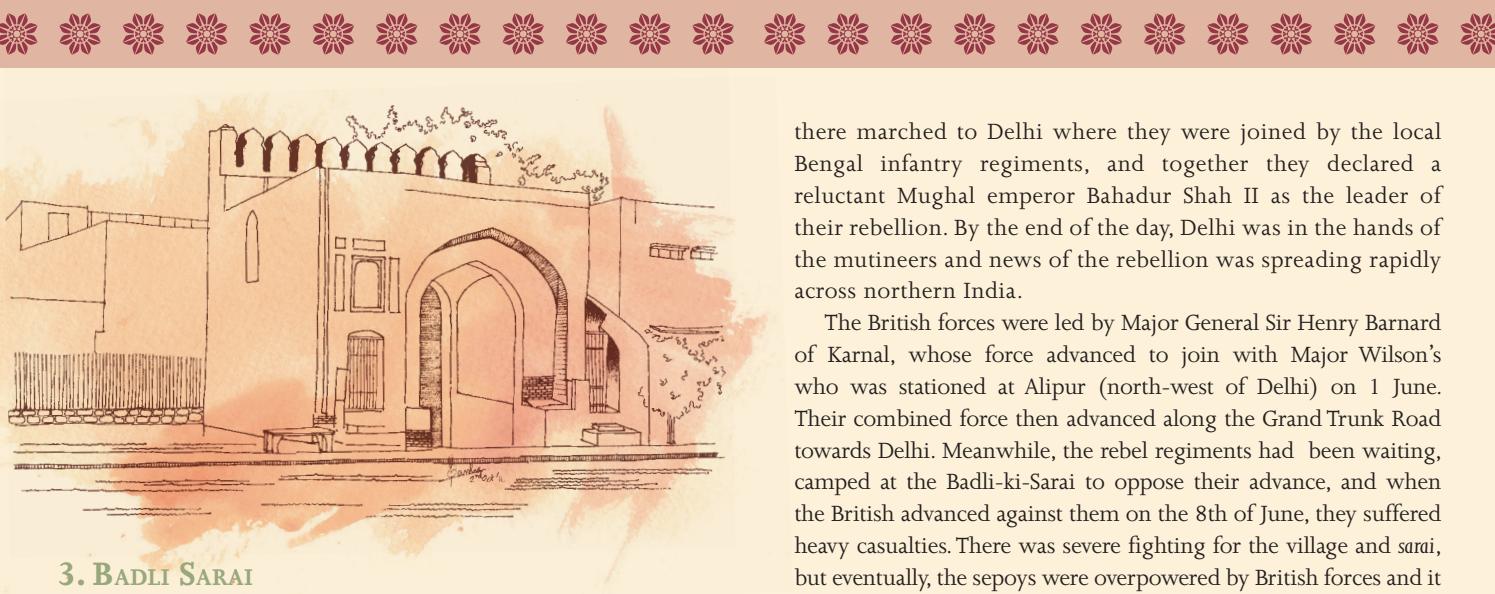
baradaris (central pavilion, sometimes twelve-arched), and a central nahr (canal) for water supply.

The area immediately north of Shahjahanabad had traditionally been in use in the Mughal times as a recreational area. Shahjahan established a garden called Khizrabad on the west bank of the River Yamuna about five miles south of the Akbarabadi Gate of the city; another garden that the emperor created outside the Kabuli Gate of the city was Tis Hazari Bagh. Shalimar Bagh, established by one of Shahjahan's queens in 1653 had extensive orchards, garden pavilions, reservoirs and water channels. Shahjahan's other daughter, Roshanara Begum also established her private garden estate at the Roshanara Bagh north of the walled city.

The tradition of garden construction continued well into the eighteenth century. The most well-known garden dating from this period is the Qudsia Bagh, established by Qudsia Begum, the wife of the later Mughal emperor Muhammed Shah 'Rangeela' in 1748. In its heyday, the massive garden had a magnificent walled enclosure around it. As the Mughal power and wealth started to decline in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, so did the upkeep and glory of most of these famed Mughal gardens.



Plan of a *char bagh*



### 3. BADLI SARAI

Very little remains today of this late Mughal period *sarai* or inn except two gates that must have stood at its either end and some foundations of the surrounding cells. The area between the gates must have originally contained a village, but this was cleared in the early twentieth century for conservation purposes. Most of the remaining structures inside have been conserved by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

It is known that the Alipur Road once passed through Badli Sarai and it was used as a convenient resting place for travellers entering Delhi from the north-west. The structures inside witnessed the historic battle between the rebel sepoys of the British Indian Army and the British forces on 8 June 1857. It is for this reason that today the whole complex is simply known as 'Mutiny Memorial', and a sign outside on the road abutting the *sarai* announces the same. The battle, known as the battle of Badli-ki-Sarai owing to its location, was fought early in the Indian Rebellion of 1857. During the course of the battle, the British forces defeated a contingent of Indian sepoys who had rebelled against the East India Company and had headquartered themselves in Delhi; an event that ultimately led to the recapture of the city by the British.

While tension between the East India Company and the Indian sepoys had been growing for several years for multiple reasons before the actual outbreak of the rebellion, it escalated to its peak during 1857. The final blow came when the East India Company tried to introduce a new Enfield rifle, which was believed to be greased with beef and pork fat, which was not acceptable to both Hindu and Muslim sepoys.

The first revolt occurred in Meerut on May 10 May 1857. Soon after, the regiments of Bengal infantry and cavalry based

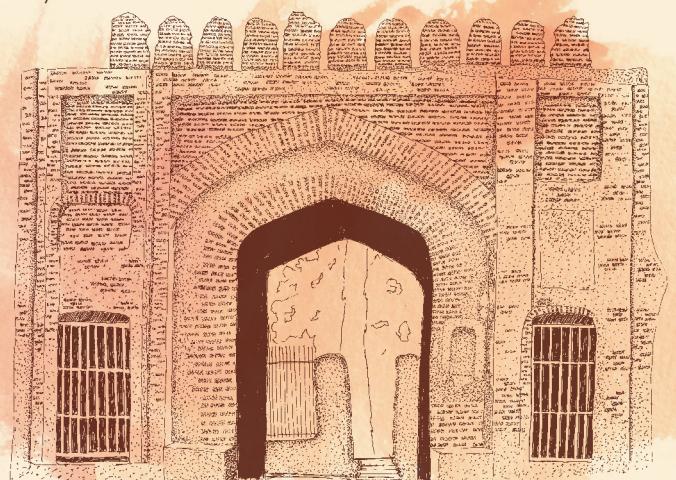
there marched to Delhi where they were joined by the local Bengal infantry regiments, and together they declared a reluctant Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II as the leader of their rebellion. By the end of the day, Delhi was in the hands of the mutineers and news of the rebellion was spreading rapidly across northern India.

The British forces were led by Major General Sir Henry Barnard of Karnal, whose force advanced to join with Major Wilson's who was stationed at Alipur (north-west of Delhi) on 1 June. Their combined force then advanced along the Grand Trunk Road towards Delhi. Meanwhile, the rebel regiments had been waiting, camped at the Badli-ki-Sarai to oppose their advance, and when the British advanced against them on the 8th of June, they suffered heavy casualties. There was severe fighting for the village and *sarai*, but eventually, the sepoys were overpowered by British forces and it is estimated that some 300 of them were killed.

Today, the two gateways of the *sarai* stand looking forlorn in a huge manicured lawn, as testimony to this gruesome battle. The gateways are constructed of Lakhori bricks with some parts covered with lime plaster. On either side of the two gates you can see the portion where the wall must have been attached to them. There is relatively more decoration on the front of the gateways and faint traces of plaster decoration; especially the inside ceiling where arch netting can be seen. A high wall must have existed all around enclosing the village, and a series of rooms for travellers to stay in, but these too have disappeared. Recent excavations have revealed the foundations of these in a section closer to the road outside.

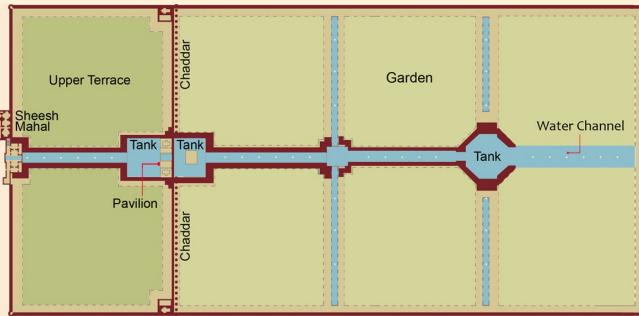
Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free



## 4. SHALIMAR BAGH

Of the many pleasure gardens built by the Mughals north of Shahjahanabad, the Shalimar Bagh is known to be the most extensive. The gardens were commissioned by Akbarabadi Begum, one of Shahjahan's wives, in 1653. A similar garden, also known as Shalimar Gardens, had been constructed by the Begum at Lahore in AD 1641. Shahjahan is said to have been very fond of this bagh



(garden) and used the palace here as a halting place enroute to Kashmir, Punjab, or Lahore. The garden and the palace within it were the favourite country house of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb and the site of his coronation in 1658. During the British Raj, Sir David Ochterlony and Lord Metcalfe, both British residents in Delhi, used the garden as their summer lodge.

The formal part of the bagh which remains today is only a small section of the original, much larger garden, where there was an extensive network of canals, wells, and buildings of which mere ruins remain. Even now the remains of the orchard, with large overgrown fruit trees, is quite pleasant to walk in. In fact, one of the main attractions for visitors to the park is the variety of fruit trees and wild flowers.

The most prominent buildings visible here today are the Sheesh Mahal—the main palace building—the ruins of a canal leading down the centre to a square pool, and two pavilions on the other side of this pool. The Sheesh Mahal itself is quite a large building, constructed mainly out of Lakhori brick and red sandstone. Its layout consists of four small rooms with a colonnade of bulbous Shahjahani columns in front. There are ornamental niches on the interior walls and traces of lime plaster is visible in parts on the outside, as is some painted decoration, most of

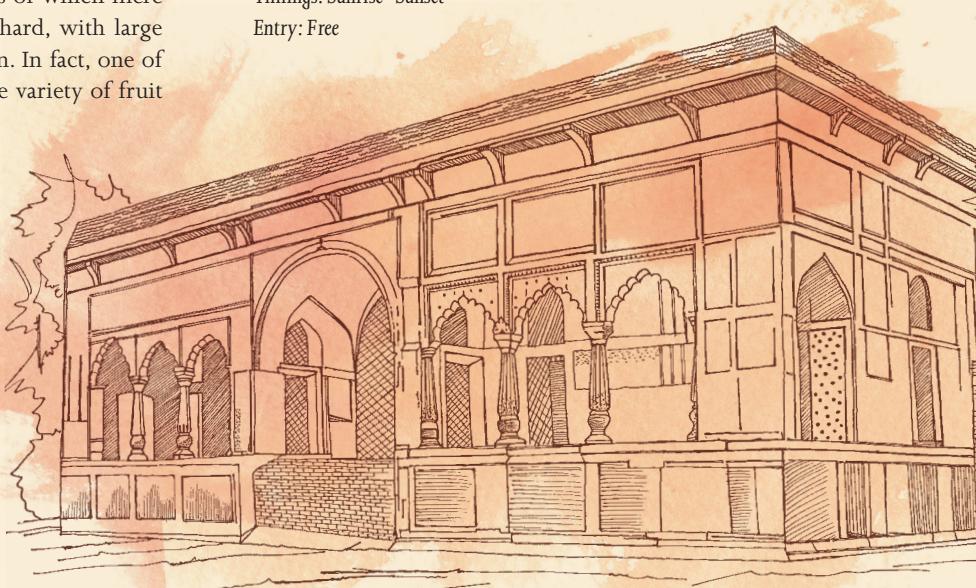
which appears to be from the colonial period when the building was used as a country retreat. There is also an attached building on one side which seems to be a later addition and of which only its solid brick masonry structure now remains, with three large arched openings facing the garden in front. The most interesting feature of the whole complex is that it was designed to delight the senses with channels of flowing water, that originated from a now-destroyed upper reservoir, through the centre of the Sheesh Mahal, and down a canal into the square pool some distance away. Standing within the large vaulted interior ceiling, one can only imagine what a pleasure it must have been to hear the gentle murmur of water cascading down through the building with a view to the distant pool surrounded with various trees laden with fruit and flowers.

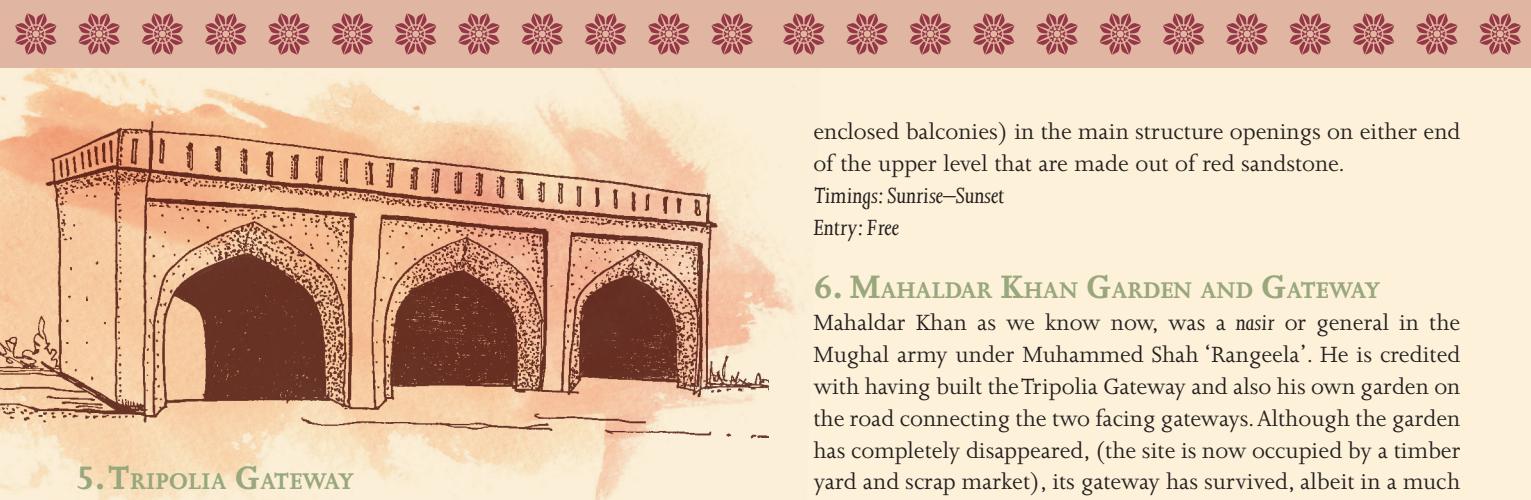
The square stepped pool at the other end has beautiful elaborately sculpted kangura (stylized motif that resembles battlements, but are ornamental) pattern at its edges. There is a grid of holes visible at the base of the pool which must have been fountains. The two remaining pavilions now stand as individual buildings, but must have been part of a long pavilion or building that spanned the outflowing canal. Even on these pavilions, some painted lime plaster decorations are visible, but appear to be from the colonial period. Beyond this, the water drops again to another square pool with a large central island on which must have stood another pavilion.

Outside this complex but within the orchard, there are also remains of a colonial house.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free





## 5. TRIPOLIA GATEWAY

Tripolia Gateway is a set of two facing gateways, one of the several historical gates to be found in Delhi. Situated on Grand Trunk Road in north Delhi, the gateways were commissioned in 1728 by Nasir Mahaldar Khan, an official in the court of Muhammed Shah 'Rangeela'. The gateways are unique in that no other gateway in Delhi has a triple passage and the only other gateway with more than one passage is Kashmiri Gate, which has two. On the road connecting Subzi Mandi with the present Delhi-Karnal Road was a *sarai* called Gul-ki-Sarai and the gates must have once enclosed this *sarai* and the bazaar between them. It was said to have been often used by Mughals and when they feared an attack, the gateways' shutters were pulled down.

Made of brick and sandstone layers, the two facing gateways have three arched openings and flat domes and a lime plaster finish. The walls of the gateways have sunk about 1.5 m into the raised ground level. In this way, the connecting passages between the roadways now have waist-high sandstone barriers; it must have been possible originally to pass underneath them. The plaster decoration that survives on the interior surfaces shows lavish attention to detail.

Presently, the gates are located in the middle of a busy vehicular road and are prone to damage. At the southern end of the gateway is located another large and imposing gateway that must have led into a garden. It has a large pointed arch that encloses an opening spanned by a stone lintel which could possibly be a slightly later addition. There are *jharokhas* (overhanging

enclosed balconies) in the main structure openings on either end of the upper level that are made out of red sandstone.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free

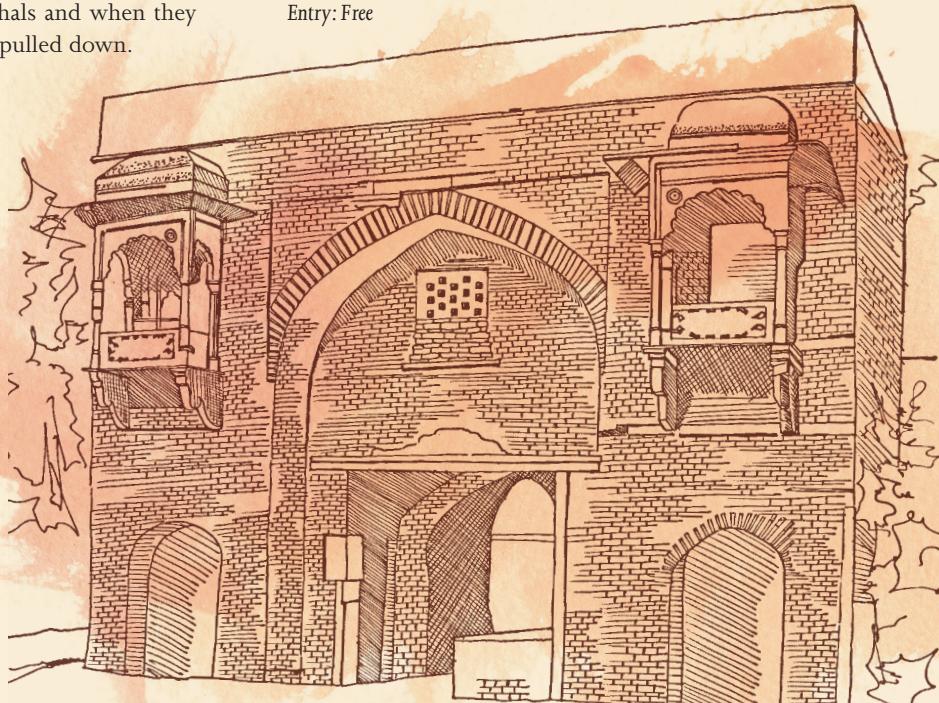
## 6. MAHALDAR KHAN GARDEN AND GATEWAY

Mahaldar Khan as we know now, was a *nasir* or general in the Mughal army under Muhammed Shah 'Rangeela'. He is credited with having built the Tripolia Gateway and also his own garden on the road connecting the two facing gateways. Although the garden has completely disappeared, (the site is now occupied by a timber yard and scrap market), its gateway has survived, albeit in a much altered condition.

The gateway to the garden itself is a two-storey structure made up of Lakhori bricks, which was earlier faced with red sandstone. The lower level is now almost obscured by small shops and the upper level is being used as a residence. At the upper level, two sandstone projecting balconies can be seen flanking either side of the gateway. There are also three arched openings in the centre that have been bricked up. Some plaster decoration can be seen on the interior surfaces.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free





## 7. ROSHANARA GARDEN

Roshanara Begum was the second daughter of the Mughal emperor Shahjahan and his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. It is a well-known fact that during the struggle for accession to the Mughal throne, Jahanara, the eldest daughter of Shahjahan sided with the more popular Dara Shikoh, while Roshanara supported Aurangzeb and is said to have been the mastermind behind his accession to the Mughal throne. To help Aurangzeb, she even spied on Dara Shikoh on a regular basis. Today, however, Roshanara is best known for the Roshanara Bagh, a pleasure garden located north-west of the walled city. The original bagh has become much smaller as a part of it was taken over by the Roshanara Club in the late nineteenth century during the British period.

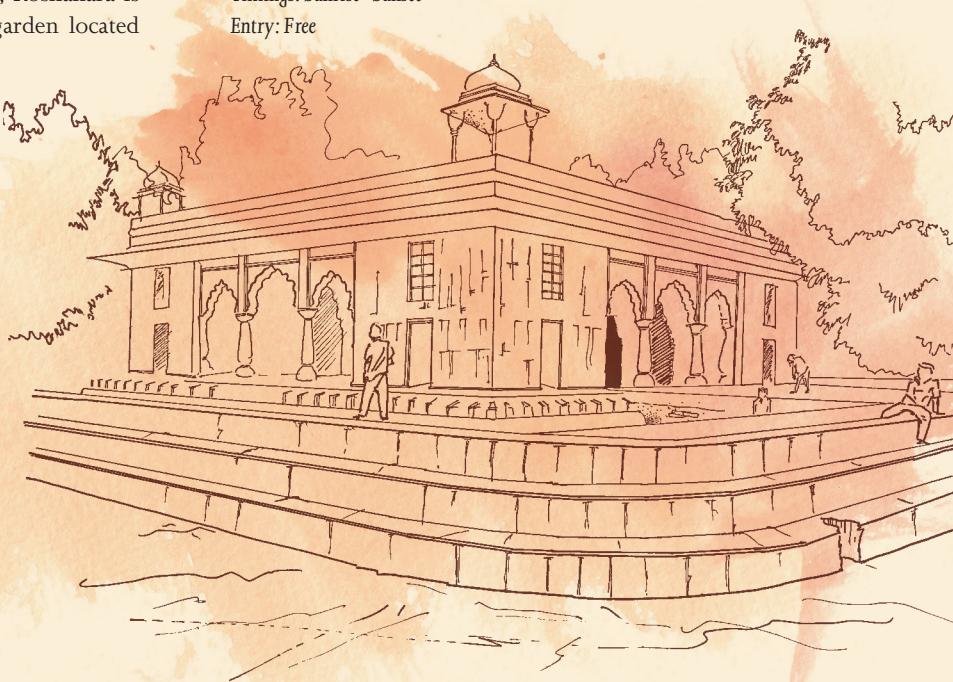
The bagh was designed and commissioned by Roshanara for her residence in the 1650s, the same time when Shahjahan was building Shahjahanabad, and after her death in 1671, this also became her burial place. Only two buildings now survive—a central pavilion or baradari and an entrance gate. The original char-bagh layout of the garden, in the middle of which the current pavilion must have stood, was obliterated when it was converted into an English garden. Today the park is not just a place for catching a glimpse of Delhi's historical and architectural legacy but also a perfect venue for seeing some old and lovely trees. The bagh is entered from what remains

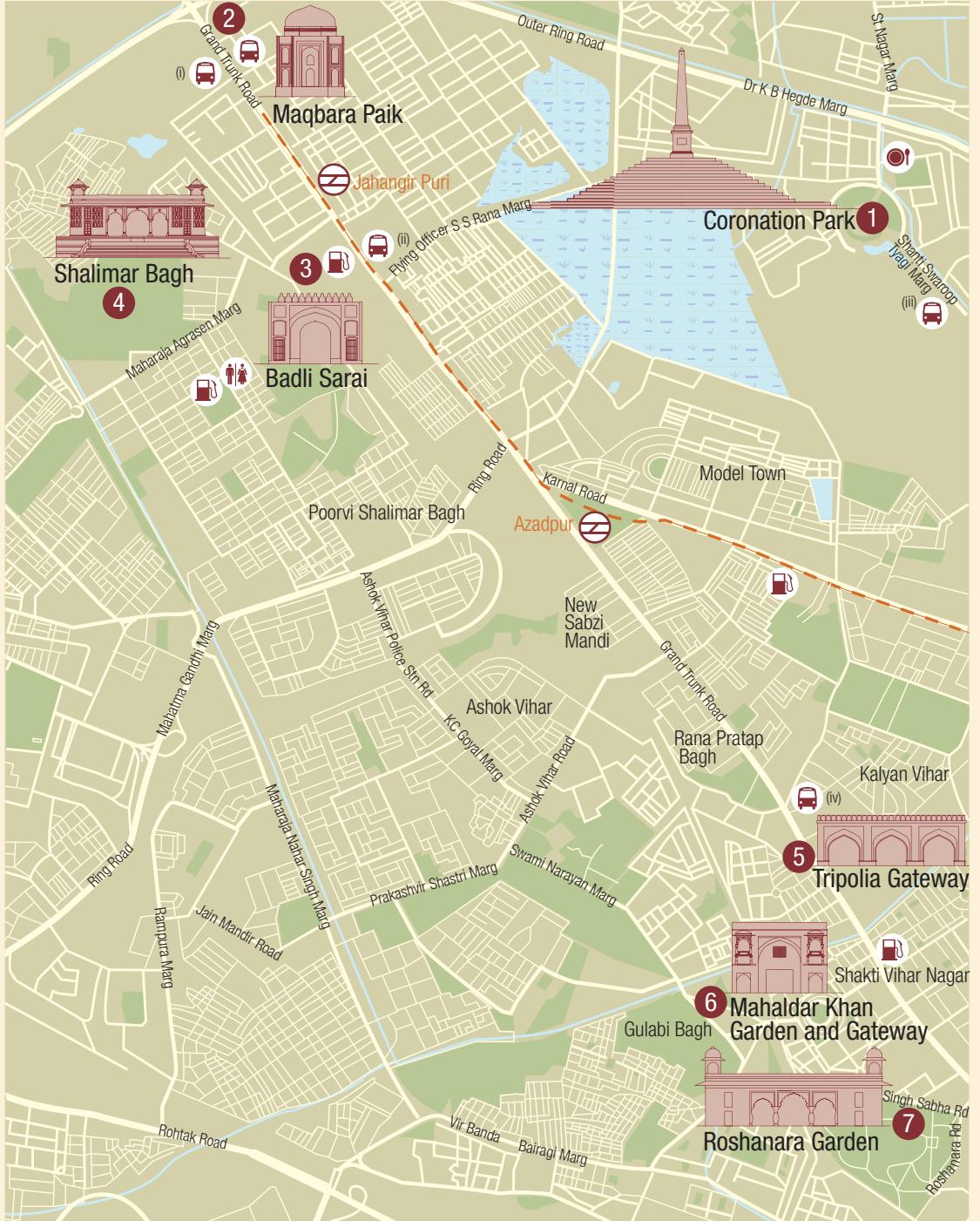
of the original gateway. The gateway is finished in lime plaster, but one can see tantalizing remains of some beautiful glazed-tile decorations in parts, especially in the upper portions. A channel runs from the gate to the pavilion some distance away, which must have originally contained fountains within. At the end of this water channel stands the main pavilion in the middle of a square pool from which the building can be accessed from two sides. Like Shalimar Bagh, the pool here is also decorated with sculpted kangra pattern on its edges. The pavilion itself is a beautifully proportioned building, reminiscent of earlier Mughal buildings, although the bulbous columns of the arcade are of late Shahjahani design. It is made of Lakhori bricks and sandstone and covered with lime plaster decoration. On the interior, traces of delicate paintings done on lime plaster can be seen.

Roshanara's grave lies in the centre of this pavillion. Some say that even though Roshanara was Aurangzeb's favourite sibling, she fell out with the emperor in her later days and that her end was sealed by Aurangzeb when she was found with a secret lover in her garden and was poisoned thereafter. She died at the age of 54 and Aurangzeb had her interred in the Roshanara Bagh. The grave is housed in the centre of an enclosure created by four marble screens with jali (screen with ornamental patterns) work, but is an open grave now, covered only with earth, the marble cenotaph probably having been stolen at some point.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free





### Nearest Bus Stops

- (i) Maqbara Paik: 165
- (ii) Badli Sarai: 159, 131, 199, 113, 333, 116, 982, 259
- (iii) C.V. Raman: 171
- (iv) Tripolia Gate: 19A, 181, 131, 102, 101E

- Bus Stand
- Petrol Pump
- Toilets
- Cafeteria
- Metro Station



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