Feroz Shah Tughlaq, his life and settlements, the abode of the Djinns, stay of the 9th Sikh guru- Guru Teg Bahadur and more!

Kotla Feroz Shah

Firuzabad, the fifth city of Delhi, now known as Kotla Firuz Shah, is a large enclosure of high walls, which then lay along the Yamuna river. With an entrance through a barbicaned main gate on the west, it contained palaces, pillared halls, mosques, a pigeon-tower and a baoli (stepped well) some of which are still in good condition. The main public mosque, Jami'-Masjid, has a spacious courtyard, the whole structure resting on a series of cells. It is, however, a pyramidal structure with a diminishing covered area in each successive storey, on the top of which, within a stone-railing, the Asokan column is planted, that strikes as a unique edifice.

Entrance Fee:

Citizens of India and visitors of SAARC (Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Maldives and Afghanistan) and BIMSTEC Countries (Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar) - Rs. 5 per head.

Others:
US $ 2 or Indian Rs. 100/- per head

(Free entry to children up to 15 years)

Source: [http://asi.nic.in/asi_monu_tktd_delhi_kotla.asp](http://asi.nic.in/asi_monu_tktd_delhi_kotla.asp)

FEROZ SHAH KOTLA

Feroz Shah Kotla, also spelled as 'Ferozshah Kotla' and 'Ferozeshah Kotla', is a spectacular structure that was built in 1354 by Emperor Firoz Shah Tughluq who ruled Delhi between 1351
and 1388 nestles within the fifth ancient city of Delhi originally named as 'Firuzabad' also spelled as 'Ferozabad'. It lies off the main Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg [Road] and very close to the famous Feroz Shah Kotla Cricket ground and stretches across a massive plot of area measuring from Peer Ghaib in the North to Hauz Khas in South Delhi.

Firoz Shah Tughluq was known to be a great builder and nephew of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq. He ascended the Throne of Delhi after the demise of Muhammad Bin Tughluq and used the Feroz Shah Kotla hunting lodge to rest during his Hunting season which was designed by Abdul Haque also spelled as Hakk and Malik Ghazi.

Feroz Shah Kotla was earlier called as 'Kushk-i-Firoz' sometimes spelled as 'Kushk-i-Feroz' which means 'Palace of Firoz' built exquisitely in an irregular polygon shape within a rectangular shaped three rubble walled enclosures with its eastern side aligned absolutely straight to overlook the Yamuna River. This fourth Palace was built next to the river banks due to shortage of water in the other three places where the Sultan had three more Palaces.

The central portion lying within the three enclosures of Feroz Shah Kotla citadel is known to be the largest and was named after the Sultan as 'Kotla Feroz Shah' and now known by locals as 'Feroz Shah Kotla'. It contains ruins of both the northern and southern parts of the citadel enclosure that is currently seen with numerous modern buildings. You will also notice the ruins of an imposing entrance and exit gateway that overlooked the western side of the enclosure and flanked by Bastions on either side. The grandeur and beauty of this Palace also fascinated Sultan Timur of the 14th Century AD and is sometimes compared with Windsor Palace of England. After the defeat of the Tughluq dynasty, this Palace was abandoned in 1490 AD.

The Ashokan Pillars
The Ashokan Pillar that lies within Feroz Shah Kotla is perfectly placed towards the north of Jama Masjid [Mosque] that was first erected by King Ashoka between 273 and 236 BC in Topra in Ambala, Haryana. In fact there was another Ashokan Pillar that is seen installed near the Hindu Rao Hospital also erected by King Ashoka in Meerut which unfortunately broke into five pieces after it was damaged during an explosion. It was neglected for a century up till 1838 when Hindu Rao took charge to transfer the Ashokan Pillar's broken pieces to Kolkata's Asiatic Society. Within a year, the structure was put together and re established.

Both the Ashokan Pillars were carefully wrapped with cotton silk and kept on a bed of reed made of raw silk to be transported on a massive carriage attached with 42 wheels and drawn meticulously by 200 men from their original places to Delhi by Feroz Shah Tughlaq to avoid any damage during the journey. Upon reaching Delhi, they were then transported on huge boats to their final destination, one within Feroz Shah Kotla and the other on the ridge near Delhi University and Bara Hindu Rao Hospital.
Feroz Shah made sure that the 13 metre tall Ashokan Pillar weighing 27 tonnes was grandly installed for which he constructed a stunning three storied pyramid shaped structure ornate with extremely high quality black and white stones that shone like metal and a 'Cupola' or 'Kalash' made of copper raised on top of the Pillar. He renamed this Pillar as 'Minar-i-Zarin' and elaborately decorated it.

The Ashokan Pillar has inscriptions dating back to the 3rd Century BC that reveals 7 main edicts of King Ashoka written in Pali and Brahmi languages which were deciphered by James Prinsep in 1837 including Buddhism teachings along with the 10 commandments of Lord Buddha which served the purpose of spreading Buddhism. Inscriptions of the various conquests of King Chauhan in Sanskrit dating back to 1163 AD and incidents of numerous Travellers and Pilgrims during the following centuries are also seen inscribed on it. This Pillar glitters like gold especially during a bright sunny afternoon when the sun's rays directly falls on it and hence is the best time to view it.

**Jami Masjid**

Jami Masjid is probably one of the most ancient and largest surviving mosque and monument still in use belonging to the Tughlaq dynasty that lies very close to the Ashokan Pillar. It was built on a series of underground cells and made of quartzite stone covered with lime plaster and surrounded by a huge courtyard with cloisters and a Prayer Hall, now in complete ruins that was once used by the Royal Ladies.

The entrance of Jama Masjid lies on the northern side and was connected by a causeway to the pyramidal structure of the Ashokan Pillar. This mosque was once visited by Sultan Timur in 1398 AD to say his prayers. He was spell bound by its beauty and constructed a mosque in Samarkand in Iran imitation the design of this Masjid. This mosque is also known to be where Emadul Mulk, a Mughal Prime Minister murdered his own Emperor Alamgir Sani in 1759 AD.

The circular Baoli, which means 'step well', lies towards the north western side of the Ashokan Pillar and in the heart of a large garden constructed in the form of subterranean apartments and a large underground canal built on its eastern side through which the water runs into the well. This Baoli served as a summer retreat for the Royalties where they spent time cooling off and bathing in the water of this well.

Feroz Shah Kotla was used by successive rulers to build their own cities and is presently transformed into a lush green land which homes the remains of some spectacular historical structures converting it into one of the most interesting tourist destination in Delhi. Ruins of other unidentified Monumental structures are also seen in a dilapidated state within the ramparts of this citadel. To point out a few is the remains of a square hall on a foundation structure lying just behind Ashokan Pillar towards the northern side of Jama Masjid and a building lying on the southern most portion of the Central enclosure depicting mosaic art.
Ferozshah Kotla can be visited on all days accept during the prayer session time held in Jama Masjid and easily accessible by local transport and the metro rail with New Delhi Railway Station as the nearest point to de-board. Foreigners are charged Rs. 100/- per person and Indian Nationals are charged Rs. 5/- per person as an entry fee with an extra charge of Rs. 25/- per camera for Photography.

Source: http://www.delhiinformation.in/tourism/monuments/ferozshahkotla.html

Feroz Shah Kotla Fort

Feroz Shah Kotla is located near Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg in between New Delhi and Old Delhi. In 1354, Sultan Feroz Shah Tughlaq established Ferozabad and Feroz Shah Kotla is the core of that extensive city. Historian Shams Siraj Afif, who lived during Feroz Shah’s reign, described the city as very well and distantly established. In the north the buildings of the city stretched from Northern Ridge (today known as Pir Ghaib). To the south the city extended to the site now marked by the Purana Qila or Old Fort. According to him the population of the city at that was around 1,50,000.

As compared to the earlier sites of substantial settlement in Delhi which had been further south only - Lal Kot/ Qila Rai Pithora (now the area around the Qutub Minar), Siri a little to its north-east, and Tughlaqabad in the hills to the south-east, Ferozabad was much further north than these three early settlements, it was also the first of the capitals to be built on the bank of the river Yamuna.

Feroz Shah Kotla was the grand and opulent royal citadel of the city. Visitors, invaders like Timur and contemporary chroniclers have given glowing descriptions of its buildings. Unfortunately most of its priceless stones and gilded and painted features have extinct today. Later on, materials for the construction of cities like Din Panah and Shergarh in the south and Shahjahanabad in the north were plundered from here.

Ruins of Palace

The walls of the citadel are as high as 15 metres high and have a slight slope on the outside. The top parapets or merlons have now disappeared but the arrow slits can still be seen. Historians have listed many structures in the fortress. One of them was ‘The Palace of the Wooden Gallery/Overhang’ was for the officers of the emperor, and the 'Central Quadrangle' or the 'Palace of the Public Court', was where the emperor held court for the general public. The surfaces were at one time covered by a fine limestone plaster which was decorated by carving and painting in various colours.
Pyramidal Structure

It is a three-storey building which was specially commissioned by Feroz Shah to support the Ashoka pillar. This pillar was set up at Topra, near Ambala, by the great Mauryan Emperor Ashoka. The pillar had several edicts regarding Ashoka's principles of government inscribed on it. This monolith pillar is 13 metres high, with a diameter of 65 centimetres at the top and 97 centimetres at the bottom. Feroz Shah ordered to bring it to Delhi and it was reinstalled here with great effort. It was crowned by a capital of coloured stones and a golden globe with a crescent on top. The building, now in ruins, originally has a railing and eight domed chhatris (pillared kiosks) at the top, and a stone lion at each corner.

Source: http://www.thedivineindia.com/feroz-shah-kotla-fort/5810

Short Biography of Firoz Shah Tughlaq (Delhi Sultan)

Firoz Shah Tughlaq succeeded to the throne of Delhi Sultanate after the death of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. He ascended the throne but he was neither an able administrator nor a tolerant ruler, neither did he succeed in recovering the lost territories in the Deccan. The capture of Janagar, Nagarkot fort and parts of Sindh were some of his successes.

Firoz Shah Tughlaq was born in 1309. He ruled for the period between 1351-1388.

Firoz Shah Tughlaq is remembered in history abolishing about twenty four types of taxes on people. Even land tax was reduced. He only collected four taxes sanctioned in Quran. Trade tariffs we also lowered.

The supports of the nobles were won by giving land grants.

He set up manufacturing centers popularly known as karkhanas, constructed roads and irrigation canals.

He also started a department of charity (Diwan-i-Khairat).

Schools were set up to improve Islamic education. Mosques, palaces, factories, orchards and new cities came up at Jaunpur, Firozpur, Azadpur and Tughlaqpur.

Firoz Shah died on September 20, 1388.
The reforms of Firoz Shah Tughlaq resulted in bringing general peace and prosperity of the people. Elliot and Elphinstone have termed him as the ‘Akbar of the Sultanate’.


Feroz Shah Kotla Fort – Letters to the djinns and other tales

Along with the stories of djinns, the fort of Firoz Shah has wonders inside. Not many know that the dilapidated pillar in the premise is nearly 2,300 years old and actually an Ashokan pillar from Topra in Haryana. By Darpan Mago

Djinns, the supernatural creatures in Islamic mythology, reside in Delhi. According to many popular beliefs, all the abandoned places are homes to these djinns. As the gentle breeze makes soft whistling sound in your ears, there is a feeling of an unexplained presence as you stand atop the Firoz Shah Kotla fort. Delhi has had its share of tumultuous past and numerous unheard stories lurk in every nook and corner of the city. A little time off from the urbanised and busy lives can open a new world of never heard of tales.

A few people in the city are taking initiatives to unfurl these dusty accounts. Delhi by Foot is an organisation that conducts heritage walks across Delhi and ‘Shaam-e-Iftaar with Djinns of Delhi’ was one such walk at Firoz Shah Kotla Fort. It was all about interesting historical tales of djinns from the area and ended with a delectable meal at Iftaar. Telling us about the popular beliefs in the area, Ramit, the organiser of walk and the founder of Delhi by Foot, said, “It is believed that djinns were made by God from a smokeless fire and assigned the task of helping the mankind. Miraj, the head of djinns had a son called Iblis, who defied God’s instructions of helping humans and was banished from the heavens along with his followers. Iblis felt that as he was more powerful than human beings, he shouldn’t serve their needs and wishes. Later, when Iblis and others realised their fault, they started praying to the God to be back in heaven again. The God agreed but conferred a punishment that djinns will have to work for the mankind till qayamat ki raat (Judgment Day) before they are taken back to heavens. Now as they are already on our earth, they stay in all abandoned places.”

The fort of Firoz Shah is a less magnificent structure and not usually the one we associate with the word ‘fort.’ It has many small chambers and people can be seen praying in different corners. Flowers, incense sticks and prayer items can be seen lying in these corners, as people believe that djinns reside in such corners or chambers. “There was a saint by the name of Baba Laddoo Shah near Turkman Gate in Delhi. Due to some construction activities in the place the government told him to shift his abode from Turkman Gate to Feroz Shah Kotla Fort. After coming here, he said that he felt spirits at that place. He used to say that even if he dies people shouldn’t stop coming and praying at this fort. I, too, have felt that some unexplained energies reside in the area. When you come here and stay till a late evening or it is one of those strange weather days, you will feel something different. I cannot describe the feeling, but it is like something is around and you’re being watched. But, at the end of the day everything boils down to your faith and beliefs,” said Ramit. This fort was part of the bigger city known as
Ferozabad and holds the distinction of being built close to Yamuna river. The work to build the place began around 1350s and around 1354 CE the structure had started taking shape.

The place also has a rich history. Not many know that the dilapidated pillar in the fort is actually an Ashokan pillar with Pali and Brahmi scripts are scribbled on it. The pillar was brought from Topra in Haryana through river route. “People believe that this pillar is head of all djinns and is djinn ki lath or the djinn’s stick (lathi). It is nearly 2,300 years old and weights around 30 tonnes,” informed Ramit.

At the end of the walk, the participants were served with delicacies like bagara rice, mirchi ka salan, halimand vegetarian lukmi. The experience ended on a sweet note — with desserts like double ka meetha and khubani ka meetha.


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