

**EDUCATIONAL VISIT TO PURANA QILA – A COULDRON HOLDING HISTORY  
OF DELHI FROM THE TIME IMEMORIAL TO THE MODERN ERA**



*Image 1 - At Bada Darwaza as the walk commenced*

On September 12, 2024, the 1st and 2nd-year students of Masters in Archaeology and Heritage management of School of heritage and research management embarked on an enlightening journey to the Purana Qila, one of Delhi's most revered historical sites. Despite bad weather and the rain, the enthusiasm was palpable as the students gathered to explore the rich cultural heritage hiding behind the walls of the grand monument.



*Image 2 – View of Indian flag as we enter Purana Qila from Bada Darwaza*

Led by Professors Sima Yadav, Sailendra Kumar Swain, and Aman Kumar Singh, the group began their expedition at the majestic Bada Darwaza, the main entrance of Purana Qila today.

The sequence of the walk was meticulously planned to ensure that the students absorbed every aspect of the site's historical significance.

Sequence of the walk -



*Image 3 – Students and teachers gazing at the artifacts found at the site.*

- 1 Museum: The walk commenced with a visit to the on-site museum, showcasing an impressive collection of artifacts unearthed during excavations. The museum holds a good collection of the pre-historic tools found at the site, Mauryan, Kushana and Gupta era pottery, beads etc.



*Image 4 – a group photo at entrance of on-site museum of A.S.I.*

2. Retrieved Items Museum (Gallery): The students marveled at the meticulously preserved relics, gaining insights into the lives of ancient civilizations. Artifacts placed here were stolen which were later retrieved back following continuous negotiations of the Indian government with the entities possessing these artifacts. In some cases, the government was able to retrieve them back as they were being smuggled out of the countries. While in others, custom departments of other countries managed to track these items and then as part of goodwill gesture, returned them back to India.



*Image 5 – At Artifacts retrieval Museum*

3. Humayun Gate: This iconic gateway, named after the Mughal emperor Humayun, stood as a testament to the region's architectural grandeur. This gateway used to open towards Yamuna when Yamuna used to flow next to the walls of the Purana Qila. We get historical mention of existence of a wooden bridge over it. Post independence, the site was used as a place for cultural activities and programmes as Delhi lacked any major stadium or Amphitheatres. Until recently, it used to host night time light show which has been discontinued by the government now.



*Image 6 – At Humayun's gate, used for cultural activities post-independence era*

4. Excavated Site : The group explored the excavation site led by renowned archaeologist BB Lal, uncovering layers of history hidden beneath the surface. There, Aman Sir talked about the importance of photography in various stages of excavation and talked about various methods used in excavation.





*Image 7 – exposed site excavated by B.B. Lal Sir*

5. Mosque (Sher Shah)/Quila-i-Kuhna: The stunning mosque, built during Sher Shah Suri's reign, exemplified the blend of Islamic and Indian architectural styles. There again, Aman Sir talked about the specific architectural style that was used in Suri's reign, plus also about the cultural continuity in the architecture despite Islamic influence because at the end, the workers who worked them were Indians who had been working on temples for hundreds of years before being forced to work on Islamic monuments. For example, Sir showed the continuity of the Panchayatan style architecture and the famous Light and shadow or Akbar-Birbal pattern that was later widely used in Mughal architecture.



*Image 8 – At Mosque (image I)*



*Image 9 – At Mosque (image II)*

6. Step-Well: This ancient water harvesting system fascinated the students, highlighting the ingenuity of ancient civilizations.



*Image 10 – At recently excavated site (One Vertical and one horizontal pit)*

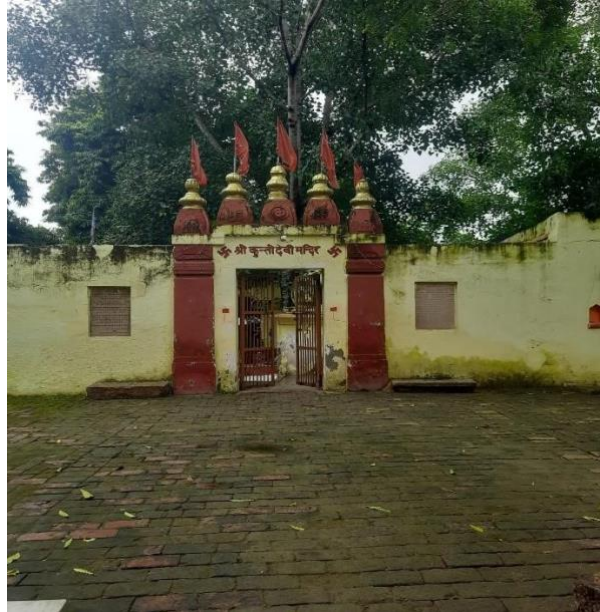
7. New Excavated Site: Recent discoveries shed new light on Purana Qila's past, sparking curiosity among the students. There's a vertical excavation pit and a Horizontal excavated pit. Until now, the team has reached Kushana era Flooring in the vertical pit and a wall has been found going from north to south-east direction. We were clearly able to distinguish between various layers from Kushana era to Rajput era followed by large deposition by floods and then by modern era.



*Image 11 – Vertically excavated pit*

8. Kunti Mandir: The ancient temple dedicated to Kunti, mother of the Pandavas, offered a glimpse into the site's mythological significance. It is said that Kunti used to worship here.





*Image 12 – At Kunti Mata Mandir*

After completing the walk, the students gathered for a photography session, capturing the essence of their experience amidst the rain-kissed monument. The expedition concluded with a tranquil visit to the lake, providing a fitting finale to the enriching experience.



*Image 13 – Shailendra Kumar Swain Sir, A.S.I. Official, Sima Yadav Ma'am*

The Purana Qila visit was a resounding success, etching lasting memories in the minds of SHRM's archaeology students. As they delved into the historical and cultural significance of the site, they gained valuable insights into India's rich heritage.



*Image 14 – a group photo at the backdrop of Bada Darwaza*



*Image 15 – A group photo at lake at the end of the walk*



*Image 16 – view of lake, a vital source of recharging of ground water, gets water from Yamuna River.*

REPORT BY -

1. Snehal Sharma
2. Nishant kumar Meena

PHOTOS BY –  
Suhasini Iyer