

Report on Field Visit to Tomb of Najaf Khan

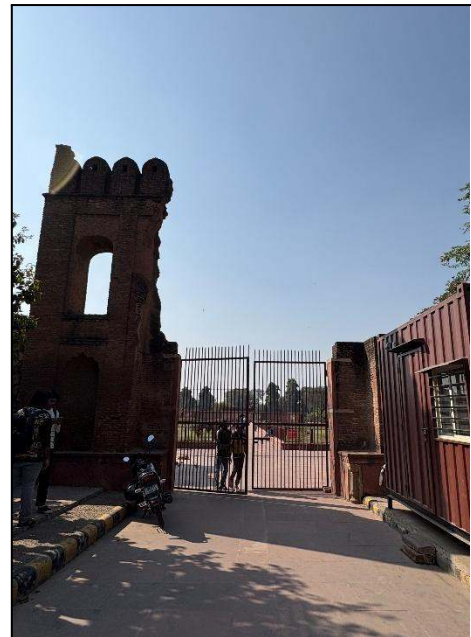
Submitted by: **Bhavik Singh, M.A. Archaeology and Heritage Management,
Semester II, (S253PAH05)**

On 6 February 2026, the students of the second semester of the M.A. Archaeology and Heritage Management and M.A. Conservation, Museology and Heritage Management programmes visited the tomb of Najaf Khan as part of site visit for the Course- Heritage Site Management. The visit was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Shalini Awasthi and Dr. Sailendra Kumar Swain. The purpose of this field visit was to understand the practical dimensions of managing a historical monument situated within a living urban environment and to apply theoretical concepts discussed in class to a real site context.

The monument we visited is the tomb of Najaf Khan, an important noble and military commander during the later Mughal period. Najaf Khan served under Emperor Shah Alam II in the eighteenth century, a time when the Mughal Empire was facing political instability and decline. He is known for reorganising the Mughal army and attempting administrative reforms to stabilise imperial authority. His tomb, therefore, represents not only a funerary structure but also a reminder of the late Mughal political landscape. The monument is located in the Lodhi Colony area of Delhi, within a residential neighbourhood that integrates several historic structures into a modern urban setting.



Tomb of Najaf Khan



Entrance to the Tomb

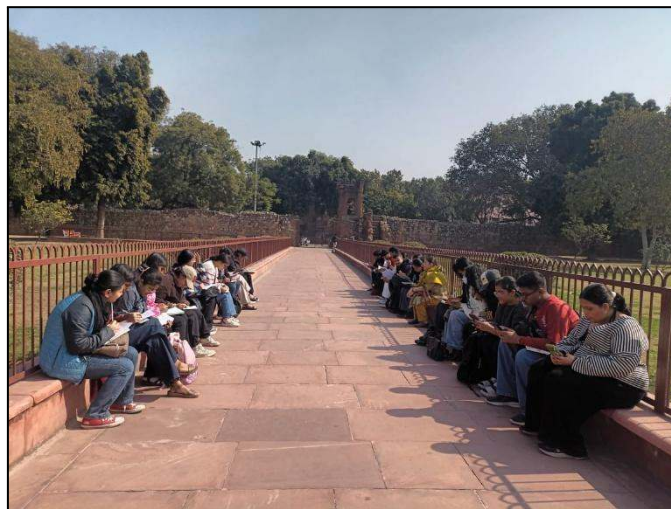
As we entered the site, our professors introduced us to the historical background of Najaf Khan and contextualised the monument within the broader framework of late Mughal architecture. They explained how the eighteenth century differed from the earlier imperial Mughal phase and how this difference is reflected in the scale and style of the structure. The tomb stands within a walled enclosure that now functions as a green open space amidst a densely built residential locality. One of the first observations was how seamlessly the monument is integrated into the everyday life of the neighbourhood.

Architecturally, the tomb reflects late Mughal characteristics. The central structure consists of a chamber constructed in masonry with arched openings. While it retains the symmetry and formal planning associated with Mughal funerary architecture, it is comparatively modest in ornamentation and scale. Unlike grand imperial tombs, this monument conveys a sense of restraint, possibly reflecting the limited resources and changing political realities of the eighteenth century. This transformation from a Charbagh -style funerary space to a public green area reflects the adaptive reuse of heritage within contemporary urban contexts.

During our observation, we noted that the site is un-ticketed and easily accessible to the public. Local residents were seen using the garden area for sitting, walking, and casual recreation. This dual identity of the monument—as both a heritage structure and a community

green space—became central to our understanding of its management. The ecological setting, including grass cover and trees, contributes positively to the urban environment by providing open space within a crowded locality. At the same time, such open usage raises questions regarding monitoring, maintenance, and long-term preservation.

In terms of conservation, the monument appears structurally stable, with visible repair work in certain areas such as plaster restoration. However, it does not display extensive interpretative signage or structured visitor management systems. The absence of detailed information panels may limit public awareness regarding its historical significance. We discussed how improved interpretation, without over-commercialisation, could enhance appreciation of the monument. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that increased visibility does not disturb the ecological balance or residential character of the area.



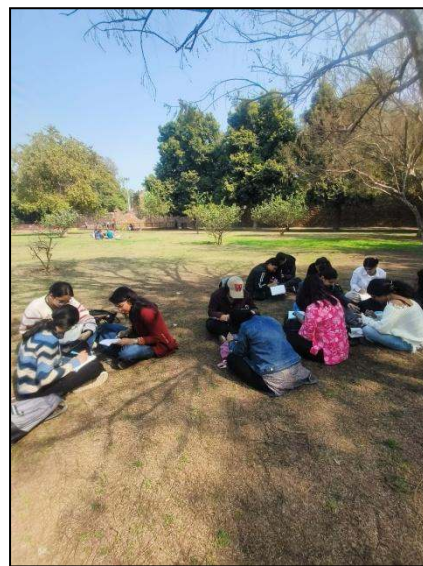
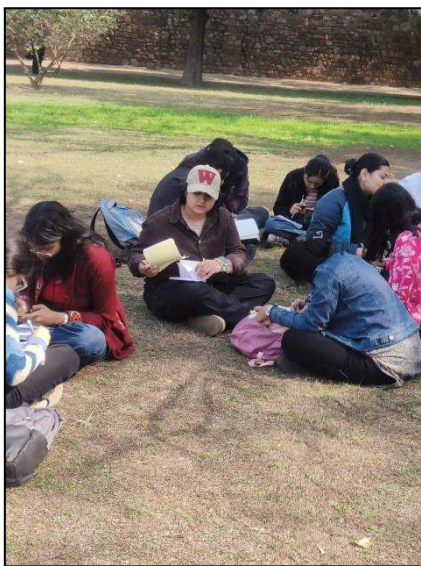
Discussion between students and teachers

As part of the academic exercise, our teachers provided us with ten assessment questions for on-site analysis:

1. Who was Najaf Khan?
2. Main features of the central monument, style of construction, and unique features.
3. Setting of the monument as a historical site.

4. Visualisation of Najaf Khan's tomb in the present day in the context of urban Delhi.
5. Ecology around the tomb – analyse.
6. State of conservation.
7. If you were to promote this monument, which features would you highlight?
8. Present site management.
9. What add-on values would you add and why? Provide justification.
10. Ground map.

We were given one hour to respond to these questions based on our observations and understanding developed during the visit.



Field-based assessment in progress at Najaf Khan's Tomb

Overall, the field visit to Najaf Khan's tomb was an important learning experience. It allowed us to observe how a historical monument exists within a contemporary urban setting and how heritage management involves balancing conservation with community use. The visit successfully connected theoretical knowledge from the classroom with practical field-based analysis.



Students and faculty of the School of Heritage Research and Management during the field visit to Najaf Khan's Tomb